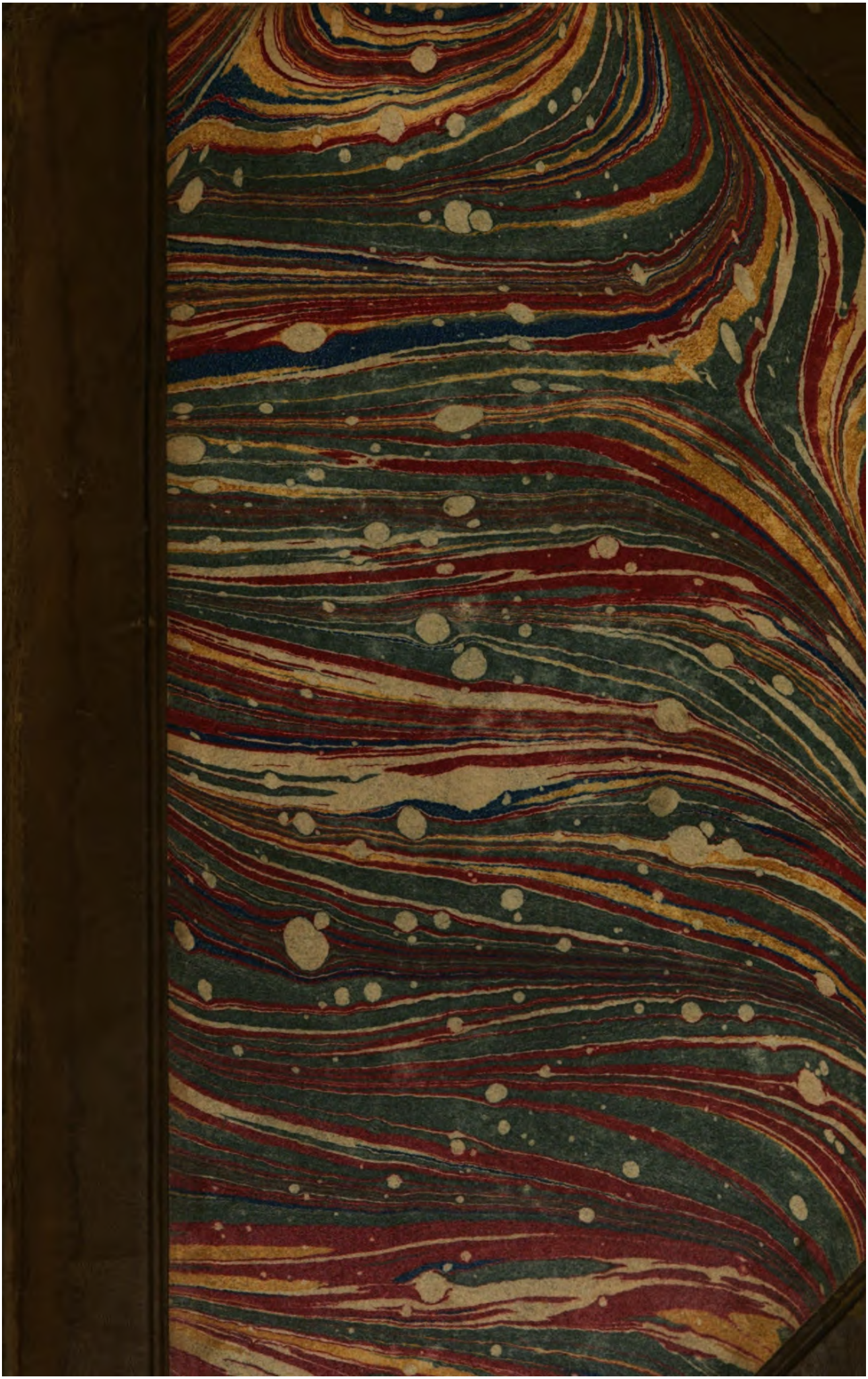

THE DYING THOUGHTS OF THE Reverend Learned and Holy Mr. RICHARD BAXTER;

VIZ.

What there is desirable in the present Life.
The Reasonableness and Necessity of believing that pious separate Spirits are with Christ.
What it is to depart, and to be with Christ.
Why it is far better to be with Christ.
The Author breathes after Willingness to depart.

ABRIDGED

By *BENJAMIN FAWCETT.*

SALOP:

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THE PREFACE

BY THE

COMPILER of this ABRIDGMENT.

IN the following Pages *the* Reader *will find none of the Triumphs peculiar to Martyrdom, nor any of those Extasies which have distinguished some particular Christians on their dying Beds. Such extraordinary Cases rather excite our joyful Surprize, than are Patterns for our Imitation.*

The Dying Thoughts *of Mr.* Baxter *chiefly present to our View what every Christian may attain, and what it is the highest Interest, as well as the indispensible Duty of every Christian to aspire after. See,*

here, his Doubts and Fears in the Prospect of Eternity; tho' he had spent a long Life in exemplary Holiness, and in great Nearness to God and Heaven. See his Jealousies over his own Heart, and anxious Concern to discover its Sincerity; together with his sober Appeals and earnest Attention to every Dictate of Reason and Scripture, in Order to establish his Mind and Conscience in a well-grounded Peace. See, also, his unwearied Striving with God and his own Soul, to have every Grace in vigorous Exercise. All these are well-known Ingredients of the Christian Temper; and therefore tend, not to perplex and discourage, but to counsel, strengthen and comfort serious Readers, while they discern, in one of Mr. Baxter's *exalted Attainments, the same Conflicts, Complaints, and Desires, which fill their own Breasts.*

'Tis observed of that Noble Lord, William Russell, *who dyed a Martyr for the Liberty of his Country, that a little before his Death, by a trusty Messenger, he sent Mr.* Baxter *his hearty Thanks for his* dying Thoughts, "*Which, says he, have*

"*made*

" *made me better acquainted with the other*
" *World, than I was before; and have*
" *not a little contributed to my Support and*
" *Relief, and to the fitting me for what I*
" *am to go through.*"

Tho' the Dying Thoughts *were written about* Forty Years *after the* Saints Rest, *yet both are evidently built on the same Principles, and are animated by the same Spirit. And let it suffice to add, that the Abridgment of both is conducted in the same Manner.*

B. FAWCETT.

Mr. *BAXTER*'s

DYING THOUGHTS.

PHILIPPIANS i. 23.

For I am in a Strait betwixt two, having a Desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better.

CHAP. I.

What there is desirable in the present Life.

§ 1. *The Vanity of Man as mortal.* § 2. *The Author's Design to speak only to himself, with a general Plan of the Work.* § 3. *The Apostle's Happiness whether in living or dying.* § 4. *The present Life is desirable* (1) *to please God*; § 5 (2) *to secure our own Salvation*; § 6. (3) *and to do good to others.* § 7. *Minding the Life to come is not the whole of Religion.* § 8. *The Old Testament Saints duly regarded the present Life.* § 9—12. *The Author is thankful for present Mercies to himself, his Friends and Country; especially for his Usefulness in the Church:* § 13, 14. *He desires to improve the Remainder of Life, and* § 15. *rejoices in his happy Situation.*

§ 1. *MAN that is born of a Woman, is of few Days, and full of Trouble: He cometh forth like a Flower, and is cut down: He fleeth also as a Shadow, and continueth not. And dost thou open thine Eyes upon such an one, and bringest me into Judgement with thee?* As a Watch, when it is wound up; or, as a Candle newly lighted; so Man, newly conceived or born, begins a Motion, which incessantly hasts to its appointed Period. And as an Action, or the Time of it, is Nothing, when it is past; so vain a Thing would Man be, and so vain his Life, were it not for the Hopes of a more durable Life, with which this is connected. But those *Hopes*, and the *Means* for supporting them, do not only distinguish a *Believer* from an *Infidel*, but a *Man* from a *Beast*. When *Solomon* describes the Difference, only in Respect to Time and the Things of Time, he well observes, that *one Event*, happening to both, shews that both are *Vanity*. And *Paul* says of *Christians*, *If in this Life only we have Hope, we are of all Men most miserable*. Tho' even in *this Life*, as related to a *better*, and as we ourselves are exercised about Things of a higher Nature than the Concerns of a temporal Life, we are far happier than the Men of the World.

§ 2. I am intending to speak to none but myself, and therefore (supposing the Meaning of the Text to be duly ascertained) shall only observe what is useful to my own Heart and Practice. In *this Chapter* I will consider *what there is desirable in the present Life:* Then shew *(Chap. 2.) the Necessity and Reasonableness of believing that pious separate Spirits are with Christ:* Next explain *(Chap. 3.) what it is to depart*

part, and to be with Christ; and *(Chap. 4.) why it is far better to be with him.* I will conclude *(Chap. 5.)* with expressing *my Concern that I myself may be willing to depart, and to be with Christ.*

§ 3. It was a happy State into which Grace had brought this *Apostle*, who saw so much of what was not only tolerable, but greatly desirable, both in living and dying. *For him to live was Christ*; that is, to do the Work, and serve the Interest of Christ: For him *to die was Gain*, that is, would be his own Interest and Reward. His *Strait* was not, whether it would be good to live, or good to depart, because both were good; but he doubted which of the two was more desirable. Nor was it his Meaning, to bring his own Interest and Christ's into Competition with each other. By Christ, or the Interest of Christ, he means, his serving the Churches of Christ upon Earth. But he knew, that Christ had an Interest also in his Saints above; and could raise up more to serve him here. Yet, because he was to judge by what appeared, and saw that such were much wanted upon Earth, this turned the Scales in his Choice; and therefore in Order to serve Christ in the Edification of his Churches, he was more inclined, by denying himself, to have his Reward delayed: At the same Time well-knowing, that the Delay of his Reward would tend to its Increase. Here let me observe,—" That even in this World, " short of Death, there is some Good so much to " be regarded, as may justly prevail with Believers " to prefer it before the present Hasting of their " Reward."—I the rather note this, that no Temptation may carry me into the Extreme of taking Nothing but Heaven to be worth minding; and so

even sinfully cast-off the World, on Pretence of Mortification, and a heavenly Life. Not that any Thing on Earth is better than Heaven, or in itself to be preferred before Heaven. The End, as such, is better than the Means, and Perfection better than Imperfection. But the present Use of the Means may be sometimes preferred before the present Possession of the End. And the Use of Means for a higher End, may be preferred before the present Possession of a lower End. Every Thing has its Season. Planting, Sowing, and Building are not so good as Reaping, Fruit-gathering, and Dwelling; but in their Season they must be first done.

§ 4. But let me *enquire, what there is so desirable in this present Life?*——The *Answer* is obvious: For, *first*, while this present Life continues, *the Will of God is fulfilled*, who will have us upon Earth for a Season; and that is best which God wills.

§ 5. *Secondly, the Life to come depends upon this present Life.* As the Life of adult Age depends upon Infancy; or the Reward upon the Work; or the Prize of Racers or Soldiers upon their Running or Fighting; or the Merchants Gain upon his Voyage. Heaven is won, or lost, on Earth; the Possession is *there*, but the Preparation is *here*. Christ will judge all Men in another State, as their Works have been in this. First——*well done, good and faithful Servant*; then——*enter thou into the Joy of thy Lord. I have fought a good Fight, I have finished my Course*——must go before *the Crown of Righteousness which the Lord the righteous Judge shall give.* All that we ever do for Salvation, must be done here. It was on Earth that Christ himself wrought the Work of our Redemption, fulfilled all Righteousness,

ousness, became our Ransom, and paid the Price of our Salvation; and here also must we do our Part. The bestowing of the Reward is God's Work, who, we are sure, will never fail. Here is no Room for the least Suspicion of his failing in any Thing he undertakes: but the Danger and Fear is of our own miscarrying, lest we be not found capable of receiving what God will certainly give to all that are fit to receive. To distrust God, is heinous Sin and Folly; but to distrust ourselves, is highly reasonable. So that if we will make sure of Heaven, it must be by *giving all Diligence to make our Calling and Election sure* upon Earth. If we fear Hell, we must fear our being prepared for it. And it is great and difficult Work we have to do upon Earth; as for Instance,—to be cured of all damning Sin;——to be born again;——to be pardoned and justified by Faith;——to be united to Christ, made wise to Salvation, renewed by his Spirit, and conformed to his Likeness;——to overcome all the Temptations of the World, the Flesh and the Devil;——to perform all the Duties toward God and Man, that must be rewarded;——*with the Heart* to *believe* in Christ *unto Righteousness, and with the Mouth* to *make Confession unto Salvation*;——also to *suffer with Christ*, that *we may reign with him*; and *be faithful to Death*, that we may *receive the Crown of Life*. Thus on Earth must we *so run, that we may obtain.*

§ 6. *Thirdly, we are Members of the World and of the Church, and must labor and do good to many*; and therefore we have greater Work to do on Earth than merely securing our own Salvation. We are intrusted with our Master's Talents for his Service,

to do our best in our Places to propagate his Truth and Grace, to edify his Church, honour his Cause, and promote the Salvation of as many Souls as we can. All this is to be done on Earth, if we will secure the End of all in Heaven.

§ 7. It is then an Error, tho' but few are guilty of it, to think that all Religion lies in minding only the Life to come, and in disregarding all Things in this present Life. All true Christians must seriously mind both the End, and Means of attaining it. If they believingly mind not the End, they will never be faithfull in the Use of the Means: If they be not diligent in using the Means, they will never obtain the End. None can use Earth well that prefer not Heaven; and none but Infants can come to Heaven, that are not prepared for it by well-using Earth. Heaven must have our highest Esteem, and our habitual Love, Desire, and Joy; but Earth must have more of our daily Thoughts for present Practice. A Man that travels to the most desirable Home, has an habitual Desire to it all the Way; but his present Business is his Journey, and therefore his Horse, Inns, and Company, his Roads, and his Fatigues may employ more of his Thoughts and Talk, and Action, than his Home.

§ 8. I have often wondered to find *David* in the *Psalms*, and other Saints before the Coming of Christ, express so great a Sense of the Things of this present Life, and say so little of another; making so much Account of Prosperity, Dominion, and Victories on the one Hand, and of Persecution, and the Success of Enemies on the other Hand. But I consider, that it was not for mere personal and carnal Interest, but for the Church of God, and for his Honour, Word, and Worship; for they knew, if Things

Things go well with us on Earth, they will be sure to go well in Heaven; if the militant Church prosper in Holiness, there is no Doubt but it will triumph in Glory. Satan does much of his damning Work by Men, as his Instruments; so that if we escape their Temptations, we escape much of our Danger. When Idolaters prospered, *Israel* was tempted to Idolatry. The *Greek Church* is now almost swallowed up by *Turkish* Prosperity and Dominion. Most follow the powerful and prosperous Side. And therefore, for the Glory of God, and for our own everlasting Salvation, we must, while upon Earth, greatly regard our own, and much more the Churches' Welfare. Indeed, if Earth be desired only for Earth, and Prosperity be loved only to gratify the Flesh, it is the certain Mark of damning Carnality and an earthly Mind. But to desire Peace and Prosperity, and to have Power in the Hands of wise and faithful Men, for the sake of Souls, the Increase of the Church, and the Honour of God, that *his Name* may *be hallowed, his Kingdom come*, and *his Will be done on Earth, as it is in Heaven*,— this must be chief of our Prayers.

§ 9. 'And now, O my Soul! be not unthankful for *the Mercies of this present Life*——*This Body* is so nearly united to thee, that it must needs be a great Help or Hindrance. Had it been more afflicted, it might have been a discouraging Clog; like a tired Horse in a Journey, or an ill Tool to a Workman, or an untuned Instrument in Musick. A sick or a bad Servant in a House is a great Trouble, and much more a bad Wife: But thy Body is nearer to thee, than either of those could be, and will be more of thy Concern. Yet

'if

'if it had been more strong and healthful, Sense 'and Appetite would have been strong; and the 'stronger thy Lusts, the greater would have been 'thy Danger, and much more difficult thy Victory 'and Salvation. Even weak Senses and Tempta-'tions have too often prevailed. How knowest 'thou then what stronger might have done? When 'I see a thirsty Man in a Fever, or Dropsy; and 'especially when I see strong and healthful Youth, 'bred up in Fulness, and among Temptations, how 'they are mad in Sin, violently carried to it, bear-'ing down the Rebukes of God and Conscience, 'Parents and Friends, and all Regard to their own 'Salvation; this tells me how great a Mercy I 'had, even in a Body not liable to their Case. Al-'so, many a bodily Deliverance has been of great 'Use to my Soul, renewing my Time and Oppor-'tunity, and Strength for Service, and bringing fre-'quent and fresh Reports of the Love of God. If 'bodily Mercies were not of great Use to the Soul, 'Christ would not so much have shewed his saving 'Love, as he did, by healing all Manner of Dis-'eases. Nor would God promise us a Resurrecti-'on of the Body, if a suitable Body did not pro-'mote the Welfare of the Soul.'

§ 10. 'I am obliged to great Thankfulness to 'God for the Mercies of this Life, which he has 'shewed to *my Friends*. That which promotes 'their Joy, should increase mine. I ought to *re-'joice with them that rejoice*. Nature and Grace 'teach us to be glad, when our Friends are well and 'prosper; tho' all this must be in Order to better 'Things than bodily Welfare.'

§ 11.

§ 11 ' Nor must I undervalue such Mercies of ' this Life as belong to *the Land of my Nativity.* ' The Want of them are Part of God's threatened ' Curse; and *Godliness has a Promise of the Life that* ' *now is, and of that which is to come,* and so *is profi-* ' *table unto all Things.* When God sends on a ' Land the Plagues of Famine, Pestilence, War, ' Persecution, especially *a Famine of the Word of* ' *God,* it is a great Sin to be insensible of it. If ' any shall say, " while Heaven is sure, we have no " Cause to accuse God, or to cast away Comfort, " Hope, or Duty," they say well. But if they say, " Because Heaven is all, we must make light of all " that befalls us on Earth," they say amiss. Good ' Princes, Magistrates, and publick spirited Men, ' who promote the Safety, Peace, and true Prospe- ' rity of the Common-Wealth, do thereby very ' much befriend Religion, and Men's Salvation, ' and are greatly to be loved and honoured by all. ' If the civil State miscarry, or fall into Ruin and ' Calamity, the Church will fare the worse for it, ' as the Soul does by the Ruins of the Body. Re- ' ligion consumes away, and falls into Contempt, ' or withered Ceremony and Formality, wherefo- ' ever Tyranny brings Slavery, Beggary, or long ' Persecution upon the Subjects. Let me therefore ' be thankful for all the Protection of Magistracy, ' the Plenty of Preachers, the Preservation from ' Enemies, the Restraint of Persecution, the Con- ' cord of Christians, and Increase of Godliness in ' this Land, and especially that the Gospel is con- ' tinued in it.'

§ 12. ' Be particularly thankful, O my Soul! ' that *God hath made any Use of thee for the Service of* ' *his*

" *his Church on Earth.*——" My God, my Soul
" for this doth magnify thee, and my Spirit rejoi-
" ceth in the Review of thy great undeserved Mercy.
" O what am I, whom thou tookest up from the
" Dunghill, or low Obscurity, that I should live my-
" self in the constant Relish of thy sweet and sacred
" Truth, and with such encouraging Success com-
" municate it to others! That I must say, now my
" publick Work seems ended, that these *Forty three*
" or *Forty four Years* I have no Reason to think that
" ever I laboured in vain! O with what Gratitude
" must I look upon all Places where I lived and la-
" boured, but above all that Place that had my
" Strength *! I bless thee for the great Numbers of
" them gone to Heaven, and for the Continuance of
" Piety, Humility, Concord and Peace among them.
" Also for all, that by my *Writings* have received
" any saving Light and Grace. O my God, let
" not my own Heart be barren, while I labour in
" thy Husbandry to bring others unto holy Fruit!
" Let me not be a Stranger to the Life and Power
" of that saving Truth, which I have done so much
" to communicate to others! O let not my own
" Words and Writings condemn me, as void of
" that divine and heavenly Nature and Life, which
" I have said so much of to the World!"

§ 13. ' Stir up then, O my Soul, thy sincere
' Desires and all thy Faculties, to do the Remnant
' of the Work of Christ appointed thee on Earth,
' and then joyfully wait for the heavenly Perfection
' in God's own Time. Thou canst truly say, *To*
' *me to live is Christ.* It is his Work, for which
' thou livest. Thou hast no other Business in the
' World. But thou doest this Work with a Mix-
' ture

* *Kidderminster.*

'ture of many Oversights and Imperfections and 'too much troublest thy Thoughts with Distrust 'about God's Part, who never fails. If thy Work 'be done, be thankful for what is past, and that 'thou art come so near the Port of Rest. If God 'will add any more to thy Days, serve him with 'double Alacrity. The Prize is almost within 'Sight. Time is swift and short. Thou hast told 'others, that *there is no working in the Grave*, and 'that it must be now or never. Dream not, be-'cause Christ's Righteousness was perfect, that God 'will save the Wicked, or equally reward the 'Slothful and the Diligent. As Sin is its own 'Punishment, Holiness is much of its own Re-'ward. Whatever God appointeth thee *to do*, see 'that thou *do it* sincerely, and *with* all *thy Might*. 'If Sin dispose Men to be angry, because it is de-'tected, disgraced, and resisted; so that God be 'pleased, their Wrath should be patiently borne, who 'will shortly be far more angry with themselves. I 'shall not be hurt, when I am with Christ, by the 'Calumnies of Men on Earth; but the saving Be-'nefit will, by converted Sinners, be enjoyed ever-'lastingly. *Words* and *Actions* are transient Things, 'and being once past are Nothing; but the Ef-'fect of them on an immortal Soul may be endless. 'All the *Sermons* that I have preached, are Nothing 'now; but the Grace of God on sanctified Souls 'is the Beginning of eternal Life. It is an un-'speakable Mercy to be thus employed sincerely 'and with Success; therefore I had Reason all this 'while to be in *Paul's Strait*, and make no Haste 'in my *Desires to depart*. The Crown will come 'in its due Time; and Eternity is long enough to

'enjoy

'enjoy it, how long soever it be delayed. But if 'I will do that, which must obtain it for myself 'and others, it must be quickly done, before my 'declining Sun be set. O that I had no worse 'Causes of my Unwillingness yet to die, than my 'Desire to do the Work of Life for my own and 'other Men's Salvation, and to *finish my Course with* '*Joy, and the Ministry I have received of the Lord!*'

§ 14. 'As it is on Earth I must do good to 'others, so it must be in a Manner suited to their 'earthly State. Souls are here closely united to Bo-'dies, by which they must receive much good or hurt. 'Do good to Men's Bodies, if thou wouldst do good 'to their Souls. Say not,——Things corporeal are 'worthless Trifles, for which the Receivers will be 'never the better.—They are Things that Nature 'is easily sensible of; and Sense is the Passage to 'the Mind and Will. Dost thou not find what a 'Help it is to thyself, to have at any Time any Ease 'and Alacrity of Body; and what a Burthen and 'Hindrance Pains and Cares are? Labour then to 'free others from such Burthens and Temptations, 'and be not regardless of them. If thou must *re-*'*joice with them that rejoice, and weep with them that* '*weep*, promote then thy own Joy by helping 'theirs; and avoid thy own Sorrows in preventing 'or curing their's. But, alas! what Power has Sel-'fishness in most? How easily do we bear our Bre-'thren's Pains and Reproaches, Wants and Afflic-'tions, in Comparison of our own? How few 'Thoughts, and how little Cost and Labour do we 'use for their Supply, in Comparison of what we 'do for ourselves? Nature indeed teaches us 'to be sensible of our own Case; but Grace tells

'us

'us that we ſhould not make ſo great a Difference 'as we do, but ſhould *love our Neighbour as our-'ſelves.*'

§ 15. 'And now, O my Soul, conſider how 'mercifully God hath dealt with thee, that thy 'Strait ſhould be between two Conditions ſo de-'ſirable. I ſhall either die ſpeedily, or ſtay yet 'longer upon Earth; which ever it be, it will be a 'merciful and comfortable State. That it is *deſira-'ble to depart, and be with Chriſt*, I muſt not doubt, 'and ſhall hereafter more copiouſly conſider. And 'if my Abode on Earth yet longer be ſo great a 'Mercy, as to be put into the Ballance againſt my 'preſent Poſſeſſion of Heaven, ſurely it muſt be a 'State which obliges me to great Thankfulneſs to 'God, and comfortable Acknowledgment; nor 'ſhould my Pain, or Sickneſs, or Sufferings from 'Men make this Life on Earth unacceptable, while 'God will continue it. *Paul* had his *Thorn in the 'Fleſh, the Meſſenger of Satan to buffet him*, and ſuf-'fered more from Men, tho' leſs in his Health, than 'I have done; and yet he *gloried in his Infirmities*, 'and *rejoiced in his Tribulations*, and was *in a Strait 'betwixt* living and dying; yea, rather choſe to live 'yet longer.—Alas! the Strait of moſt Men is be-'tween the Deſire of Life for fleſhly Intereſt, and 'the Fear of Death as ending their Felicity; be-'tween a tiring World and Body, which makes 'them weary of living, and the dreadful Proſpect of 'future Danger, which makes them afraid of dying. 'If they live, it is Miſery; if they muſt die, they 'fear greater Miſery; whether they look behind or 'before them, to this World or the next, Fear and 'Trouble is their Lot. Yea, many a ſerious Chriſ-

'tian,

'tian, thro' the Weakness of their Trust in God, 'live in this perplexed Strait, weary of living, and 'afraid of dying, continually prest between Grief 'and Fear. But *Paul's Strait* was *between two* Joys, 'which of them he should desire most. And if 'that be my Case, what should much interrupt my 'Peace or Pleasure? If I *live*, it *is for Christ*, for his 'Service, and to prepare for my own and others 'everlasting Felicity: And should any Suffering 'make me impatient with such a Work, and such 'a Life? If I *die* presently, it *is my Gain*: God, 'who appoints me my Work, limits my Time; 'and surely his glorious Reward can never be un-'seasonable, or come too soon, if it be the Time 'that he appoints. When I first engaged myself 'to preach the Gospel, I reckoned, as probable, 'but upon *one or two Years*, and God has made it 'above *Forty four*. And what Reason have I to be 'unwilling now, either to live, or die? God's Ser-'vice hath been so sweet to me, that it hath over-'come the Trouble of constant Pains, or Weakness 'of the Flesh, and all that Men have said or done 'against me.—How much the following Crown ex-'ceeds this Pleasure, I am not able now to conceive. 'There is some Trouble in all this pleasant Work, 'from which the Soul and Flesh would rest. And '*Blessed are the Dead which die in the Lord*; *yea*, '*saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their La-'bours, and their Works do follow them.*—O my Soul, 'what Need has this kind of Strait to trouble thee? 'Leave God to his own Work, and mind that 'which is thine. So live, that thou mayst say, '*Christ liveth in me, and the Life which I now live 'in the Flesh, I live by the Faith of the Son of God,*

'who

'*who loved me, and gave himself for me.* Then, as
'thou hast lived in the Comfort of Hope, thou
'shalt die to the Comfort of Vision and Enjoy-
'ment. And when thou canst say of God, *Whose*
'*I am, and whom I serve*, thou mayst boldly add,
'*I know whom I have believed*, and *into his Hands I*
'*commit my* departing *Spirit.*'

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

The Necessity and Reasonableness of believing that pious separate Spirits are with Christ.

§ 1, 2. (I) *Such Faith is necessary,* § 3. (1) *to ascertain the Design of Life;* § 4. (2) *to excite to Holiness;* § 5. (3) *to make us know, value, and improve our Mercies;* § 6. (4) *and to comfort us under Sufferings.* § 7. (II) *Such Faith is reasonable, because* § 8. (1) *the Soul is immortal;* § 9. (2) *this Immortality is the Dictate of Nature;* § 10. (3) *every Man ought to seek Happiness;* § 11. (4) *Men and Brutes differ in the Knowledge of God and Futurity;* § 12. (5) *God is a just Governour;* § 13. (6) *and there is a Gospel Revelation: Also because,* § 14. (7) *of God's Regard to Prayer;* § 15. (8) *the Ministration of Angels;* § 16. (9) *Satan's Temptations;* § 17. (10) *and especially the sanctifying Influences of the Holy Spirit.* § 18—21. *The Author inculcates these Considerations upon himself, in order to strengthen his own Faith.*

§ 1. THE Text suggests to my Thoughts—*the Necessity of believing that the Souls of the godly, when departed hence, shall be with Christ,*—and *the Reasonableness of such a Faith.* We are elsewhere

where assured, that *we shall be with him where he is.* And to *be with him*, can mean no less than a State of Communion, and a Participation of Happiness. To believe such a State of Happiness for departed pious Souls, must appear upon Consideration to be both necessary and reasonable.

§ 2. (1) *The Necessity of believing that pious separate Spirits are with Christ*, appears by considering, that without this Belief—*we shall be uncertain concerning the Design of Life,—we shall lose the most powerful Motives to a holy Life,—We can neither know, estimate, nor improve our Mercies,—nor can we bear our Sufferings with Comfort.*

§ 3. (1) *We shall be uncertain concerning the Design of Life.* It is allowed, that the right End of Life, is to *please God.* But I must desire to please God better than I do in this imperfect State. I must desire to please him perfectly. And our Desires of our ultimate End must have no Bounds. God has made the Desire of our own Happiness so necessary to the Soul of Man, that it cannot be separated from our Desire to please him. Therefore, both in Respect to God, and to our own Happiness, we *must believe that he is the* everlasting *Rewarder of them that diligently seek him.* If we know not whether God will turn our pleasing him to our Loss, or to our having no Gain by pleasing him; this would hinder our Love to him, and our Trust and Joy in him; and consequently hinder the Chearfulness, Sincerity, and Constancy of our Obedience. Had we no *Certainty* what God will do with us, we must have some *Probability* and *Hope*, before we can be entirely devoted to his Service. How can a Man pitch upon an *uncertain End?* If he waver so as to have

have no *End*, he can use no *Means:* And if he lays aside both End and Means, he lives not as a *Man*, but as a *Brute*. Or if he pitch upon a wrong End, he will but make Work for Repentance.

§ 4. (2) *We shall lose the most powerful Motives to a holy Life.* Indeed Goodness is desirable for itself; but the Goodness of *Means*, is their Fitness for the *End*. We have here Abundance of Hindrances, Temptations, and Difficulties, which must be overcome. Our Natures are diseased, and greatly indisposed to the most necessary Duties; and will they ever be discharged, if the necessary Motives be not believed? Our Duties to God and Man may cost us our Estates, Liberties, and Lives. The World is not so happy as commonly to know good Men from bad, nor to encourage Piety and Virtue, or to forbear opposing them. And who will let go his present Welfare, without some Hope of better as a Reward? Men don't use to *serve God for nought*; or while they think it will be their Loss to serve him.—A Life of Sin will not be avoided for inferior Motives. When Lust and Appetite incline Men strongly and constantly to their respective Objects, what shall sufficiently restrain them, except the Motives from Things eternal? If Sin so overspread the Earth, notwithstanding all the Hopes and Fears of a Life to come, what would it do, if there were no such Hopes and Fears?

§ 5. (3) *We can neither know, estimate, nor improve our Mercies.* God gives us all the Mercies of this Life, as *Helps* to an immortal State of Glory, and as *Earnests* of it. Sensualists know not what a Soul is, nor what Soul-Mercies are, and therefore know not the just Value of all bodily Mercies; but take

up

up only with the *Carcass*, *Shell*, or *Shadow*, instead of the *Life* of their Mercies. No wonder they are so unthankful for God's Mercies, when they know not the real Excellency of them.

§ 6. (4) *Nor can we bear our present Sufferings with Comfort*, without the Hopes of living with Christ. What should support and comfort me under my bodily Languishings and Pains, my weary Hours, and daily Experience of the *Vanity and Vexation* of all Things under the Sun, had I not a Prospect of the comfortable End of all? I, that have lived in the Midst of great and precious Mercies, have all my Life had Something to do to overcome the Temptation of wishing that I had never been born; and had never overcome it, but by the Belief of a blessed Life hereafter. We should be strongly tempted, in our considerate Moments, to murmur at our Creator, as dealing worse by us than by the Brutes; if we must have had all those Cares, and Griefs, and Fears by the Knowledge of what we want, and the Prospect of Death and future Evils, which they are exempted from, and had not withal the Hopes of future Felicity to support us. *Seneca* had no better Argument to silence such Murmurers, than to tell them, "If this Life has no more Evil "than Good, and you think God does you Wrong, "you may remedy yourselves, by ending it when "you will." But that could not cure the Repinings of Nature, when weary of the Miseries of Life, and yet afraid of dying. No wonder that so many fancied that Souls were punished in these Bodies for Something done in a pre-existent State. "O how contemptible a Thing is Man, says *Seneca*, "unless he lifts up himself above human Things."

Therefore, says *Solomon*, when he had tried all sensual Enjoyments, *I hated Life, because the Work that is wrought under the Sun, is grievous unto me; for all is Vanity and Vexation of Spirit.*

§ 7. (II) As for *the Reasonableness of believing that pious separate Spirits are with Christ*, I have often thought, whether an implicit Belief of it may not be better, than searching into it's Nature, and trying what can be said against it. I have known many *godly Women*, who never disputed the Matter, but served God comfortably to a very old Age, and who lived many Years in such a *chearful Readiness and Desire for Death*, as few studious Men ever attain to: This, no doubt, was the *divine Reward* of their long and faithful Service of God, and trusting in him. On the contrary, as Doubts and Difficulties are apt to present themselves to an inquisitive Mind, they must be answered; for if we reject them unanswered, we give them half the Victory over us: And a Faith that is not upheld by such Evidence of Truth, as Reason can discern and justifie, is often joined with much Doubting, which Men dare not open, but do not therefore overcome; and the Weakness of such a Faith may tend to enfeeble all the Graces and Duties which should be strengthened by it. Who knows how soon a Temptation from Satan, or Infidels, or from our own dark Hearts, may assault us, which will not be overcome without clear Evidence? Yet many that try, and reason, and dispute most, have not the strongest Faith. Indeed there is a wide Difference between that *Light which discovers the Thing itself*, and *a mere artificial Kind of Knowledge to form Arguments and answer Objections.* Unlearned Persons, who have little

little of the *latter*, may have more of the *former*; even that Teaching from God, which reaches the Heart, as well as the Understanding. And who does not find it necessary to pray hard for this divine Teaching? When I can prove the Truth of the Word of God, and of the Life to come, with the most convincing Evidence of Reason, I feel my Need to cry daily to God, to *increase my Faith*, and to give me that Light which may sanctifie the Soul, and reach the End. Nevertheless *this effectual* Teaching ordinarily supposes *that* which is *Artificial*. Unlearned Christians are convinced, by good Evidence, that God's Word is true, and his Rewards sure; tho' they cannot state that Evidence, or conceive of it without some Confusion. With respect to curious and needless Enquiries, beyond what is revealed, it is a Believer's Wisdom implicitly to trust his Soul to Christ, and to fear that vain, vexatious Knowledge, which is selfish, and savours of a Distrust of God, and is that Sin, and Fruit of Sin, which the learned World too little fears.——That *God is the Rewarder of them that diligently seek him*, and that holy Souls shall be in Blessedness with Christ, I am convinced by the following concurrent Evidences, on which my Soul raises it's Hopes: — *The Immortality of the Soul*;—*The Belief of it naturally implanted in all Men*;—*The Duty of all Men to seek after future Happiness*;—*The Difference between Men and Brutes concerning the Knowledge of God and Futurity*; —*The Justice of God, as the Governor of the World*; —*Divine Revelation*;—*God's hearing and answering Prayer*;—*The Ministration of Angels*;—*The Temptations of Satan*;—And especially *the sanctifying Operations of the Spirit of God.*

§ 8. (1) *The Soul of Man is immortal*, and therefore, if good, cannot be for ever in a bad Condition. An immortal Spirit is, " A distinct, self-conscious, " invisible Being, endowed with natural Powers of " never ceasing Action, Understanding, and Will, " and which is neither annihilated nor destroyed " by Separation of Parts." Such is the Soul of Man. If in this Flesh our Spirits were not inactive and useless, we have no Reason to think that they will be so hereafter, and that for ever. Tho' by the *Light of Nature* we may know the Immortality of Souls, yet without supernatural Light, we know not what Manner of Action they will have in their separate State. It satisfies me, that God will not continue their noblest Powers in vain; and how those Powers shall be exercised, is known to him; and this his Word tells us, more than Nature. All Things considered, there is no Reason to fear that Souls shall lose their Activity, tho' they change their Manner of Action; and so it is naturally certain that they are immortal. And if holy Souls are so far immortal, their Holiness must infer their happy Immortality. The most just and holy God will certainly use those well, whom he makes holy.

§ 9. (2) *The Belief of the Soul's Immortality is naturally implanted in all Men.* Almost all *Pagan* Nations at this Day, as well as the *Mahometans*, believe it. As for the most barbarous *Cannibals* and *Brasilians*, whose Understandings are least improved, they are rather ignorant of it, than disbelieve it. Tho' some *Philosophers* denyed it, they were every Way inconsiderable: Tho' many others were doubtful, it was only a Certainty which they professed to want, and not a Probability.—Most of the *Apostates* from *Christianity*, besides those Philosophers who have been

it's

it's violent *Opposers*, fully acknowledged it. *Julian* was so persuaded of it, that with a View to it, he exhorted his *Priests*, and the rest of his *Subjects*, to great Strictness of Life, and to see that the *Christians* did not exceed them.——Indeed few of those that affect, like the *Sadducees*, to disbelieve it, are able to free themselves from the Fears of future Misery; but with all their Efforts, Conscience still troubles them. And whence should all this be in Man, and not in Beasts, if Man had no more Cause for Hopes and Fears than they?

§ 10. (3) *God has made it every Man's Duty to seek after future Happiness, as the one Thing needful*, and therefore there must certainly be such a Happiness for them that truly seek it. *Some* believe a State of future Retribution, as *Christians*, *Mahometans*, and most Heathens. *Others* think it is *uncertain*, yet very *probable*. And to *others* it is also *uncertain*, tho' they rather think it untrue. Now *all these* ought to seek after it, and make it their chief Care, and Labour; for Natural Reason requires every Man to seek that which is *Best* with the greatest Diligence, and assures us that a *Probability* or *Possibility* of future everlasting Happiness is better, and more worthy to be sought, than any Thing attainable in this present Life. As the Will of Man necessarily desires Happiness, it must desire that most, which is Best, and which is known to be so. In this Life, there is nothing certain for an Hour. It is certain, that the longest Life is short. It is certain, that Time and sensual Pleasure, when past, are Nothing, and no better than if they had never been. It is also certain, that they are dissatisfying while we possess them; for carnal Pleasure is no sweeter to a

Man than to a Beast, and to a Beast is unattended with Fear of Death, or any Misery after Death; nor has the Beast any Labours, Sufferings, or Tryals, in Order to obtain a future Happiness, or avoid a future Misery.——Besides it is self-evident, from the Perfections of God, and from the Nature of his Works, that he does not make it Man's natural Duty to care and labour most for that which is not, or to seek what is not to be attained. If so, the Duty of Man would result from Deceit and Falshood; and God would govern the World by a Lye, and not by Power, Wisdom, and Love; and the better any Man was, and the more he did his Duty, he would be only the more deluded and miserable; and the more wicked and unbelieving any Man was, the wiser and happier would he be. But all this is contrary to the Perfections and Works of God; for he makes Nothing in vain; nor can he lie; much less will he make Holiness itself, and all that Duty and Work of Life which Reason obliges all Men to perform, to be not only vain, but pernicious.

§ 11. (4) *The Difference between Men and Brutes with Respect to the Knowledge of God and Futurity*, shews that they differ as much in their Hopes. Man knows that there is a God by his Works; and that this God is our Lord, our Ruler, and End; and that we naturally owe him all our Love and Obedience; and that it is not the Manner even of good Men to suffer their most faithful Servants to be Losers by their Fidelity, or to set them upon labouring in vain. Man also knows, that his own Soul is immortal, and therefore must be *well* or *ill* for ever, and that this ought to be cared for. And why should God give

Man.

Man all this Knowledge more than to the Brutes, if Man is designed for no more Happiness than Brutes? Every wise Man makes his Work fit for its Design; and will not God do so? If God was not perfectly wise, he would not be God. Therefore to deny Man's future Hopes, is to deny God himself.

§ 12. (5) *The Justice of God as the Governor of the World,* infers a State of future Retribution. If God did not govern Man by Laws, Judgment, and Executions, there would be no proper *Law of Nature,* and Man would have no proper Duty, nor be in any Sin or Fault: But Experience tells us, that God Morally governs the World; and his Right to do so is unquestionable. If God was not the Ruler of the World, the World would have no universal Laws; for no Man is the universal Ruler; nor are Kings, and other supreme Powers, utterly lawless and ungoverned. And if God be a Ruler, he is just; else he is not so good as he requires earthly Princes to be. But how is God a righteous Ruler, if he draws all Men to him by Deceit? If he obliges them to seek and expect a Reward which he will never give? If he makes Man's Duty his Misery? If he requires Man to labour in vain? If he suffer the Wicked to persecute and kill his Servants, without punishing the one, and gloriously recompensing the other in a future State?

§ 13. (6) *The Gospel-Revelation* is the clear Foundation of our Faith and Hope. God has not left us to the mere Light of Nature. *Christ has brought Life and Immortality to Light.* One greater than an Angel was sent from Heaven to tell us what is there, and which is the Way, and to secure our Hopes. He has conquered Death and entered before us, as

our Captain and Forerunner, into the everlasting Habitations. He has *all Power in Heaven and Earth*, and *all Judgment is committed to him*. All his Word is full of Promises of our future Glory at the Resurrection. Nor are we without Assurance that the departing Soul at Death enters upon a State of Joy and Blessedness; as appears —— by the Promise to the penitent *Thief* on the Cross; —— the Parable of the rich Man and *Lazarus*; —— Christ's telling the *Sadducees* that God *is not the God of the Dead, but of the Living*; —— the Translation of *Enoch* and *Elijah*, and the Appearance of *Moses* with *Elijah* on the Mount of Transfiguration; —— our Lord's arguing, that *they who kill the Body, are not able to kill the Soul*; —— his *commending his Spirit into his Father's Hands*, and its being *in Paradise*, while his Body was in the Grave; —— his promising, *Where I am, there shall also my Servant be*, &c; —— *Stephen's seeing Heaven opened*, and *his praying, Lord Jesus, receive my Spirit*; —— Our being *come to the Spirits of just Men made perfect*; —— *Paul's desiring to depart, and to be with Christ which is far better, and to be absent from the Body, and present with the Lord*; —— the *Blessedness of the Dead which die in the Lord*; —— the *disobedient Spirits being in Prison*, and *the Cities of Sodom and Gomorrha suffering the Vengeance of eternal Fire*; —— also Christ's saying, *When ye fail*, that is, leave this World, *ye shall be received into everlasting Habitations*.

§ 14. (7) *God's hearing and answering Prayer* in this Life, assures his Servants that he is their true and faithful Saviour. How often have I cryed to him when there appeared to be no Help in second Causes; and how frequently, suddenly, and mercifully

fully has he delivered me! Such extraordinary Changes, beyond my own and other's Expectations, while many plain-hearted, upright Christians by Fasting and Prayer sought God on my Behalf, have abundantly convinced me of a special Providence, and that God is indeed a Hearer of Prayer. I have also seen Wonders done for others, by Prayer, more than for myself: Tho' I and others are too much like those, who *cried unto the Lord in their Trouble, and he saved them out of their Distresses*, but *they forgot his Works, and his Wonders that he shewed them.* And what were all those merciful Answers, but the Fruits of Christ's Power, Faithfulness and Love, the fulfilling of his Promises, and the Earnest of the greater Blessing of Immortality, which the same Promises entitle me to?

§ 15. (8) *The Ministration of Angels* is also a Help to my Belief of Immortality with Christ. *They* have *Charge over us,——encamp round about us,——bear us up in their Hands,——joy in the Presence of God over our Repentance,* —— and *are all ministring Spirits, sent forth to minister for the Heirs of Salvation:*——As *our Angels, they always behold the Face of our Father which is in Heaven:——When the Son of Man shall come in his Glory, all the Holy Angels* shall come *with him,* and *he shall send them forth, and they shall sever the Wicked from among the Just.* Not only *of Old* did they appear to the Faithful as Messengers from God, but many Mercies does God give *to us* by their Ministry. And that they are now so friendly and helpful to us, and make up one Society with us, greatly encourages us to hope, that we are made for the same Region, Employment, and Converse. They were once in a Life of Trial,

tho' not on Earth; and having overcome, they rejoice in our Victory. The World above us is not uninhabited, nor beyond our Capacity and Hope; *but we are come to the City of the living God, and to an innumerable Company of Angels.*

§ 16. (9) *Even Satan himself by his Temptations* has many Ways cherished my Hopes of Immortality. Few Men, I think, that observe what passes within them, but have had some Experience of such inward Temptations, as shew that the Author of them is an invisible Enemy, and assure us that there are Diabolical Spirits, which seek Man's Misery by tempting him to Sin, and consequently that a future Happiness or Misery must be expected by us all.

§ 17. (10) *More especially the sanctifying Operations of the Spirit of God* are the Earnest of Heaven, and the sure Prognostick of our immortal Happiness. ——'Tis *a Change of grand Importance* to Man, to be renewed in his Mind, his Will, and Life. It repairs his depraved Faculties. It causes Man to live as Man, who was degenerated to a Life too much like the Brutes. Men are *Slaves to Sin*, till *Christ makes them free. Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is Liberty.* If *the Love of God shed abroad on our Hearts*, be not our Excellence, Health, and Beauty, what is? *That which is born of the Flesh, is Flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit, is Spirit. Without Christ* and his Spirit, *we can do Nothing.* Our dead Notions and Reason, tho' we see the Truth, have not Power to overcome Temptations, nor raise up Man's Soul to its Original and End, nor possess us with the Love and joyful Hopes of future Blessedness. It were better for us to have no Souls, than have

have our Souls void of the Spirit of God.——*Heaven is the Design and End* of this important Change. What is our Knowledge and Faith, but to know and believe that Heaven consists in the Glory and Love of God there manifested, and that it was purchased by Christ, and given by his Covenant? What is our Hope, but *the Hope of Glory*, which *we thro' the Spirit wait for?* What is our Love, but a Desire of Communion with the Blessed God, begun here, and perfected hereafter? What Christ teaches and commands, he works in us by his Spirit. He sends not his Spirit to make Men craftier than others for this World, but *wiser to Salvation*, and more holy and heavenly. *The Children of this World are in their Generation wiser than the Children of Light.* Heavenly-mindedness is the special Work of the Spirit.——In producing this Change *the Spirit overcomes all Opposition from the World, the Flesh and the Devil.* Christ first overcame the World, and teaches and causes us to overcome it, even its Flatteries and its Frowns. *Our Faith is our Victory.* Whether this Victory be easy, and honourable to the Spirit of Christ, let us appeal to our Experience of the Wickedness of the World, and of our own Weakness and Falls.—— *None can do this Work on the Soul of Man but God.* Not the most learned and holy Teachers, or the wisest and most affectionate Parents, or the greatest Princes. Evil Angels neither can, nor will do it. Good Angels do Nothing towards it, but as the obedient Ministers of God. We cannot quicken, illuminate, or sanctifie ourselves; and tho' we have some Power, both Conscience and Experience testifie, that we have Nothing but *what we have received,*——*Christ promised*

his Spirit to all true Believers, to be in them as his Advocate, Agent, Seal and Mark; and indeed the Spirit here, and Heaven hereafter, are the chief of all his Promises. —— *That this Spirit is given to all true Believers, is evident by the Effects of it.* They have Ends, Affections, and Lives different from the rest of Mankind. They live upon the Hopes of a better Life, and their heavenly Interest overrules all the opposite Interests of this World; in Order to which they live under the Conduct of divine Authority, and to obey and pleaseGod is the great Business of their Lives. The Men of the World discern this Difference, and therefore hate and oppose them, because they find themselves condemned by their heavenly Temper and Conversation. Believers are conscious of this Difference; for they desire to be better, and to trust and love God more, and to have more of the heavenly Life and Comforts; and when their Infirmities make them doubt of their own Sincerity, they would not change their Governor, Rule or Hopes for all the World; and it is never so well and pleasant with them, as when they can trust and love God most; and in their worst and weakest Condition they would fain be perfect. Indeed, whatever real Goodness is found among Men, it is given by the same Spirit of Christ: But it is notorious, that, in Heavenly-mindedness and Virtue, no Part of the World is comparable to serious *Christians*.—This Spirit Christ also expressly promised, as *the Means and Pledge, the First-Fruits and Earnest of the heavenly Glory*; and therefore it is a certain Proof, that we shall have such a Glory. He that gives us a spiritual Change, which in it's Nature and Tendency is heavenly; he that sets our Hopes

and

and Hearts on Heaven, and turns the Endeavours of our Lives toward future Blessedness, and promised this preparatory Grace as the Earnest of that Felicity; may well be trusted to perform his Word in our compleat, eternal Glory.

§ 18. ‘ And now, O weak and fearful Soul! ‘ why shouldst thou draw back, as if the Matter ‘ was doubtful? Is not thy Foundation firm? Is ‘ not the Way of Life, thro' the Valley of Death, ‘ made safe by him that conquered Death! Art ‘ thou not yet delivered from the Bondage of thy ‘ Fears? Hast thou not long ago found in thee the ‘ Motions, and effectual Operations of this Spirit? ‘ And is he not still residing and working in thee, as ‘ the Agent and Witness of Christ? If not, whence ‘ are thy Groanings after God, thy Desires to be ‘ nearer to his Glory, to know him and love him ‘ more? Whence came all the Pleasure thou hast ‘ had in his sacred Truth, and Ways, and Service? ‘ Who subdued for thee thy Folly, Pride, and vain ‘ Desires? Who made it thy *Choice to sit at the Feet* ‘ *of Jesus, and hear his Word*, as *the better Part, and* ‘ *count* the Honours and Preferments of the World ‘ *but Dung* and Dross? Who breathed in thee all ‘ those Requests thou hast sent up to God? Over- ‘ value not corrupt Nature; it brings forth no such ‘ Fruits as these. Remember what thou wast in ‘ the Hour of Temptation, how small a Matter has ‘ drawn thee to Sin. Forget not the Days of thy ‘ youthful Vanity. Overlook not the Case of thy ‘ sinful Neighbours, who in the midst of Light, still ‘ live in Darkness, and hear not the loudest Calls ‘ of God. Is it no Work of Christ's Spirit that ‘ has made thee to differ? Thou hast nothing to

boast

'boast of, and much to be humbled, and also to 'be thankful for. Thy holy Desires are, alas! too 'weak; but they are holy. Thy Love has been 'too cold; but it is the most holy God whom thou 'hast loved. Thy Hopes have been too low; but 'thou hast hoped in God, and for his heavenly 'Glory. Thy Prayers have been too dull and in-'terrupted; but thou hast prayed for Holiness and 'Heaven. Thy Labours have been too slothful; 'but thou hast laboured for God, and Christ, and 'the good of Mankind. Tho' thy Motion was too 'weak and slow; it has been Godward, and there-'fore it is from God. O bless the Lord, not only 'for giving thee his Word, and sealing it with un-'controuled Miracles, but also for frequently and 'remarkably fulfilling his Promises, in the Answer 'of thy Prayers, and in great Deliverances of thy-'self and of many others; and that he has by Re-'generation been preparing thee for the Light of 'Glory! And wilt thou yet doubt and fear, against 'all this Evidence, Experience, and Foretaste?'

§ 19. I think it no needless Labour to confirm my Soul in the full Persuasion of the Truth of its immortal Nature, and of a future Life of Joy or Misery, and of the certain Truth of the Christian Faith. I can no more doubt *the Being and Perfection of God*, than whether there be an Earth or a Sun. *Christianity* is only known by *Revelation*, which is so attested externally to the World, and internally to holy Souls, as makes Faith a ruling, victorious, and comfortable Principle. But the Soul's Immortality and future Reward is known in some Measure by the *Light of Nature*, and more perfectly by *Revelation*. When I consider the great Unlike-

lines

lineſs of Men's Hearts and Lives to ſuch a Belief as we all profeſs, I cannot but fear, that not only the Ungodly, but moſt that truly hope for Glory, have a far weaker Belief of the Soul's Immortality, and the Truth of the Goſpel, than they are apt to imagine. Can I be fully perſuaded of the future Rewards and Puniſhments of Souls, and that we ſhall be judged hereafter as we have lived here, without deſpiſing all the Vanities of the World, and ſetting my Heart with Reſolution and Diligence to a holy, heavenly, fruitful Life? Who could ſtand trifling, as moſt Men do, at the Door of Eternity, that verily believed his immortal Soul muſt be ſhortly there? Tho' ſuch a one had no Certainty of his own Salvation, he would nevertheleſs ſearch and try, watch and pray, and ſpare no Care, Coſt, or Labour to make all ſure. If a Man once ſaw Heaven and Hell, would he not afterwards exceed the moſt reſolute Believer? I confeſs there is much Weakneſs of Faith in Things unſeen, even where there is Sincerity. But where there is little Diligence for the World to come, I muſt think there is but little Belief of it, and that ſuch Perſons are not aware how much they ſecretly doubt the Truth of it. Moſt complain of the Uncertainty of their Title to Salvation, and very little of their Uncertainty of a Heaven and a Hell. Whereas a hearty Perſuaſion of the *latter*, would do more to convince them of the *former*, than long Examinations, and many Marks of Trial. It would indeed confound Faith and Reaſon, if in the Body we had as clear and lively Apprehenſions of Heaven and Hell, as Sight would occaſion; nor is the Soul fit, while in the Body, to bear ſuch a Sight. But yet there is an over-

over-ruling Seriousness, to which the Soul must be brought, by a firm Persuasion of future Things. And he that is careful and serious for this World, and looks after a better only in the second Place, must give me Leave to think that he believes, but as he lives, and that his Doubting of a Heaven and Hell, is greater than his Belief.

§ 20. O then, for what should my Soul more pray, than for a clearer and stronger Faith? " *I* " *believe, Lord, help my Unbelief!* I have many " thousand Times groaned to thee under this Bur- " then of remaining Darkness and Unbelief. I have " many thousand Times thought of the Evidences " of Christianity, and of the Necessity of a lively, " powerful, active Faith. I have cryed to thee " Night and Day, *Lord, increase my Faith!* I have " written and spoken that to others, which might " be most useful to myself, and render my Faith " more like Sense. Yet, Lord, how dark is this " World? What a Dungeon is Flesh? How little " clearer are my Perceptions of Things unseen, " than they were long ago? Is no more Growth " of them to be expected? Does the Soul no more " increase in vigorous Perception, when the Body " no more increases in the Vigor of Sensation? " Must I sit down with so low a Measure, when I " am almost there, where Faith is changed for " Sight? O let not a Soul that is driven from this " World, and weary of Vanity, and can think of " little else but Immortality, that seeks and cries " both Night and Day for the heavenly Light, and " fain would have some Foretaste of Glory, and " some more of the First-Fruits of the promised " Joys,—let not such a Soul either long, or cry, or

" strive

" strive in vain! Punish not my former grieving of
" thy Spirit, by deserting a Soul that cries for thy
" Grace, so near it's great and unconceivable
" Change? Let me not languish in vain Desires,
" at the Door of Hope; nor pass with Doubts and
" Fears from this Vale of Misery! Which should
" be the Season of triumphant Faith, and Hope,
" and Joy, if not when I am entering on the World
" of Joy? O Thou, that hast left us so many Words
" of Promise, *that our Joy may be full*, send, O *send*
" *the Comforter*, for without his heavenly Beams,
" after a thousand Thoughts and Cares, it will still
" be Night and Winter with my Soul!"

§ 21. But I fear a Distrust of God and my Redeemer, has had too great a Hand in my Desires after a more distinct Knowledge than God ordinarily gives to Souls in Flesh. I know that I should implicitly, absolutely, and quietly *commit my Soul into my Redeemer's Hands*; for a distrustful Care of the Soul, as well as the Body, is our great Sin and Misery. Yet we must desire that our Knowledge and Belief may be as distinct, as Divine Revelations are. We can love no farther than we know; and the more we know of God and Glory, the more we shall love, desire and trust. If I may not be ambitious of too sensible and distinct Foretastes of Things unseen, yet I must desire and beg the most fervent Love of them that I am capable of, that my Soul may not pass with Distrust and Terror, but with suitable triumphant Hopes, to everlasting Pleasures.
" —— O *Father of Lights, who givest Wisdom to*
" *them that ask*, shut not up this sinful Soul in
" Darkness! Leave me not to grope in unsatisfied
" Doubts, at the Door of celestial Light! Deny
me

" me not now the lively Exercise of Faith, Hope, " and Love, which are the Stirrings of the New " Creature, the Dawnings of eternal Day, and the " Earnest of the promised Inheritance!"——Tho' like *Cicero*'s, after reading *Plato*'s Book on Immortality, our *Doubts return*, and our Fear interrupts and weakens our Desires and Joys; yet I find that it is chiefly an *irrational Fear*, occasioned by the Darkness of the Mind, the Greatness of the Change, the dreadful Majesty of God, and Man's natural Aversion to Death; even when Reason is fully satisfied that such Fear is consistent with certain Safety. Were I on the top of a Castle or Steeple, fastened by the strongest Chains, or guarded by the surest Battlements, I could not possibly look down without Fear; and so it is with our Prospect into the Life to come. If therefore my Soul sees undeniable Evidence of Immortality, and is able by irrefragable Arguments to prove a future Blessedness; if I am convinced that Divine Promises are true, and trust my Soul, and all my Hope, upon them; then, neither my Averseness to die, nor my irrational Fear of entering upon Eternity, can invalidate the Reasons of my Hope, nor prove the Unsoundness of my Faith, but only the Weakness of it. *Why are ye fearful, O ye of little Faith?*——was Christ's just Reproof to his Disciples. A timorous Heart needs to be chided, by saying, *Why art thou cast down, O my Soul! and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God*, &c.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

What it is to depart, and to be with Christ.

§ 1, 2. (I) *To be with Christ includes,* § 3. (1) *his Presence,* § 4. (2) *Union to him, and* § 5. (3) *Communion with him, and* § 6. *with his glorified Saints.* § 7. (II) *In Order to be with Christ, we must depart,* § 8. (1) *from the Body;* § 9. (2) *from former bodily Enjoyments; and* § 10. (3) *from the more rational Pleasures of Learning,* § 11. *Friendship,* § 12. *Means of Grace, and* § 13. *Acquaintance with worldly Affairs.* § 14. *The Author has no Fear that the Church will want him,* § 15. *Desires cheerfully to submit to a Separation from the Body, and* § 16, 17. *laments his Soul's Attachment to Flesh and Sense.*

§ 1. HAVING proved that Faith and Hope have a certain future Happiness to expect, the Text directs me next to consider,——*what it is to be with Christ,* and——*what it is to depart in order to be with him.*

§ 2. (I) *To be with Christ* includes——*Presence with him,* ——*Union to him,* and *Participation of his Happiness.*

§ 3.

§ 3. (1) *The Presence of Christ*, which pious separate Spirits shall enjoy, must refer to his Godhead, as well as to his human Soul and Body.—We shall be present with the *Divine Nature of Christ*, as manifested in and by his Glory. He teaches us to pray, *Our Father, which art in Heaven*, because in Heaven the Father gloriously shines forth to holy Souls. TheSoul of Man is eminently said to be in the Head, because there it understands and reasons, and not in the Foot or Hand, tho' it be also there. As we look a Man in the Face when we talk to him, so we look up to Heaven when we pray to God. Tho' *in God we live, and move, and have our Being*, both as the God of *Nature* and *Grace*; yet by the Works and Splendour of his *Glory* He is eminently in Heaven, manifesting himself there by some created Glory; for his Essence is the same every where.—We shall be present with *the human Nature of Christ both Soul and Body.* But here our present narrow Thoughts must not too boldly presume to determine the Difference between Christ's glorified Body, and his Flesh upon Earth; nor where his glorified Body is, nor how far it extends; nor wherein his Soul and his glorified Body differ, seeing it is called *a spiritual Body.* We can conceive no more of such a Body, than that it is pure, incorruptible, invisible to mortal Eyes, and fitted to the most perfect State of the Soul. Nor need we wonder how a whole World of glorified Bodies can all of them be present with the one Body of Christ; for as the Solar Beams are so present with the Air, that none can discern the Difference of the Places which they possess, and a World of Bodies are present with them both;

both; so may all our Bodies, without any Confusion, be present with Christ's Body.

§ 4. (2) *The Union to Christ*, which pious separate Spirits shall also enjoy, must be like that of Subjects to their King; but how much more we know not. The more spiritual, pure, and noble any Natures are, the more Inclination they have to Union. Such Instances of Union, as the Vine and Branches, the Head and Members, are of extensive Import; yet being but Similitudes, we cannot determine how extensive Far be it from us to think that Christ's glorified Body is of such an earthly Composition, and of such a limitted Extent, as it was here; for then, as his Disciples and a few more were present with him, while the rest of the World were absent, and had none of his Company; so it would be in Heaven. But all true Believers from the Creation to the End of the World, as well as a *Paul*, shall *be with Christ and see his Glory*. And tho' there will be different Degrees of Glory, as there have been of Holiness, yet none in Heaven are at such a Distance from Christ, as not to enjoy the Felicity of his Presence.

§ 5. (3) We shall *also* have *Communion with the Divine and Human Natures of Christ*; both which shall be the felicitating Objects of perfect Knowledge, and holy Love, to the separate Spirit before the Resurrection. The chief Part of this Communion will consist in Christ's Communications to the Soul. As the whole Creation is more dependent on God, than the Fruit on the Tree, or Plants on the Earth, or the Members on the Body; so God uses second Causes in his Communications to inferior Natures; and it is more than probable, that Christ's Human

Human Nature is the ſecond Cauſe of communicating both Grace and Glory, both to Man in the Body, and to the ſeparate Soul. As the Sun is both the Cauſe and Object of Sight to the Eye; ſo is Chriſt to the Soul. For as *God*, ſo *the Lamb is the Light and Glory of* the heavenly *Jeruſalem, and in his Light we ſhall have Light.* Tho' Chriſt *ſhall give up the Kingdom to the Father*, ſo *that God may be all in all*, and his Creatures be fully reſtored to his Favour, and a healing Government for recovering lapſed Souls to God ſhall be no more needed; yet ſurely he will not ceaſe to be our Mediator, the Churches Head, and the Channel of everlaſting Light, Life, and Love to all his Members. As *we* now *live becauſe he lives*, like *the Branches in the Vine*; and as the Spirit that now quickens, enlightens, and ſanctifies us, is firſt the Spirit of Chriſt before it is our's; and is communicated from God thro' him to us; ſo will it be in the State of Glory. *There* our Union and Communion with him will be perfected, and not deſtroyed or diminiſhed.—As it would be Arrogance to think we ſhall be above the Need and Uſe of Chriſt and his Communications; ſo, I doubt not, we ſhall ever have Uſe for one another; as is plainly intimated by *ſitting down with Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob in the Kingdom of God*; by being *in Abraham's Boſom*; by *ſitting at Chriſt's right and left Hand in his Kingdom*; by being *made Ruler over ten Cities*; and by joining with thoſe that *ſing the Song of* Moſes *and of the Lamb.*

§ 6. And certainly if I *be with Chriſt*, I ſhall be with all them that are with Chriſt; even with all the heavenly Society. Our mortal Bodies muſt have

have so much Room, that the Earth is little enough for all its Inhabitants. So narrow is our Capacity of Communion here, that those at the *Antipodes*, or on the opposite Side of the Earth, are almost as strange to us as if they were in another World. What Strangers are we to those of another Kingdom, County, or Parish, and even of another House? But we have great Cause to think, by many scriptural Expressions, that our heavenly Union and Communion will be nearer and more extensive, and that *all the Glorified shall know each other.* It is, I confess, a pleasant Thought to me, and greatly helps my Willingness to die, to think that *I shall go to all the holy Ones, both Christ, and Angels, and pious separate Spirits.* They are each of them better, and more amiable than I am. Many are better than one, and the perfect Whole than a sinful Part, and the *New Jerusalem* is the Glory of the Creation. God has given me a Love to all that are holy for their Holiness; and a Love to the Work of Love and Praise which they continually and perfectly perform; and a Love to his celestial Habitation, to his Glory shining there. My old Acquaintance, with many a holy Person gone to Christ, makes my Thoughts of Heaven the more familiar to me. O how many of them could I name! And it is no small Encouragement to one that is to enter upon an unseen World, to think that he goes no untrodden Path, nor enters into a solitary or singular State; but follows all that have passed by Death, from the Creation to this Day, into endless Life. O how emboldening to consider, that I am to go the same Way, and to the same Place and State, with all the Believers and Saints that have ever gone before me!

§ 7.

§ 7. (II) But I muſt *depart* before I can thus *be with Chriſt*. I muſt particularly depart—from *this Body*,—from *all its former Delights*,—and alſo from *more rational Pleaſures belonging to the preſent Life and World*.

§ 8. (1) *I muſt depart from this Body. Here* theſe Eyes muſt ſee no more, this Hand move no more, theſe Feet walk no more, this Tongue ſpeak no more. As much as I have loved, and over-loved, this Body, I muſt leave it to the Grave. There muſt it lie, and rot in Darkneſs, as a neglected and loathſome Thing. This is the Fruit of Sin, and Nature would not have it ſo.—But it is only my Shell, my Tabernacle, my Cloathing, and not my Soul itſelf.——It is only a Diſſolution; Earth to Earth, Water to Water, Air to Air, and Fire to Fire,—It is but an Inſtrument laid by, when all its Work is done; a Servant diſmiſſed, when his Service is ended: As I caſt by my Lute, when I have better Employment.—It is but as Flowers die in Autumn, and Plants in Winter.—It is but a Separation from a troubleſome Companion, and putting off a Shoe that pinched me. Many a ſad and painful Hour, many a weary Night and Day have I had. What Cares and Fears, what Griefs and Groans has this Body coſt me? Alas! how much of my precious Time has been ſpent to maintain, pleaſe, or repair it? Often have I thought that it coſt me ſo dear to live, yea to live a painful, weary Life, that were it not for the higher Ends of Life, I had little Reaſon to be much in Love with it, or be loth to leave it.——To depart from ſuch a Body, is but to remove from a ſordid Habitation. I know it is the *curious wonderful Work* of God, and not to be

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despised, or unjustly *dishonoured*, but admired and well-used; yet our Reason wonders that so noble a Spirit should be so meanly housed, for we must call it, *Our vile Body.*——To depart from such a Body, is but to be loosed *from the Bondage of Corruption*, from the Clog and Prison of the Soul. That Body, which was a fit Servant to the Soul of innocent Man, is now become as a Prison.——And further, to depart from such a Body, is but to be separated from an accidental Enemy, and one of our greatest and most hurtful Enemies; not indeed as the Work of our Creator, but as the Effect of Sin. What could Satan, or any other Enemy of our Souls, have done against us without our Flesh? What is it but the Interest of this Body, that stands in Competition with the Interest of God and our Souls? What else do the Prophane sell their heavenly Inheritance for, as *Esau* his Birthright! What else is the Bait of Ambition, Covetousness, and Sensuality? What takes up the Thoughts and Cares which we should lay out upon Things spiritual and heavenly, but this Body and its Life? What steals away Men's Hearts from the heavenly Pleasures of Faith, Hope, and Love, but the Pleasures of this Flesh? This draws us to Sin, and hinders us from, and in, our Duty. Were it not for bodily Interests and its Temptations, how much more innocent and holy might I live? I should have Nothing to care for, but to please God, and to be pleased in him, were it not for the Care of this bodily Life. What Employment should my Will and Love have, but to delight in God, and love him, and his Interest, were it not for the Love of the Body, and its Concerns? By *this* the Mind is darkened, the Thoughts diverted, our Wills cor-

rupted, our Heart and Time alienated from God, our Guilt increaſed, our heavenly Deſires and Hopes deſtroyed, Life is made unholy and uncomfortable, and Death terrible. God and Souls are ſeparated, and eternal Life is neglected, and in Danger of being utterly loſt. I know that in all *this* the ſinful Soul is the chief Cauſe and Agent: But is not bodily Intereſt its Temptation, Bait, and End? Is not the Body, and its Life, and Pleaſure the chief *alluring* Cauſe of all this Sin and Miſery? And ſhall I take ſuch a Body to be better than Heaven, or refuſe to be looſed from ſo troubleſome a Yoke-Fellow, and ſeparated from ſo burthenſome and dangerous a Companion?

§ 9. (2) *I muſt depart from all the former Pleaſures of this Body.* I muſt taſte no more Sweetneſs in Meat or Drink, in Reſt or Action, or any ſuch Thing as now delights me. Houſes and Lands, Goods and Wealth muſt all be leſt; and the Place where I live muſt know me no more. All I laboured for, or took Delight in, muſt be no more to me than if they had never been. But conſider, O my Soul!——Thy former Pleaſures are already paſt. Thou loſeſt none of them by Death, for they are all loſt before; unleſs immortal Grace has made them immortal, by ſanctifying them. All that Death does to them, is to prevent the Repetition of them upon Earth.—Is not the Pleaſure which we loſe by Death, common to every Brute? Meat is as ſweet to them, and Eaſe as welcome, and Appetite as vehement. Why then ſhould it ſeem hard to us to loſe that, when God pleaſes, which we deprive the Brutes of, at our Pleaſure? If we are Believers, we only exchange theſe Delights of Life, for the greater

Delights

Delights of a Life with Christ; a Comfort, which our Fellow-Creatures the Brutes have not.——Are not the Pleasures of Life usually imbittered with such Pain, that they seldom countervail the attending Vanity and Vexation? 'Tis true Nature desires Life under Sufferings that are tolerable, rather than die: But that is not so much from the sensible Pleasure of Life, as from mere natural Inclination to Life, which God has implanted in us. ——Do we not willingly interrupt these Pleasures every Night, when we betake ourselves to Sleep? To say that Rest is my Pleasure, is but to say, that my daily Labours and Cares are so much greater than my waking Pleasures, that I am glad to lay by both together. If we can be thus content every Night to die, as it were, to all our waking Pleasures, why should we be unwilling to die to them at once? ——If they be forbidden Pleasures, which you are unwilling to leave, those must be left before you die; otherwise you had better never have been born. Every wise and godly Man casts them off with Detestation. Indeed the same Cause which makes Men unwilling to live a holy Life, has a great Hand in making them unwilling to die; even because they are loth to leave the Pleasures of Sin. If the Wicked be converted, he must be gluttonous and drunken no more; he must live in Pride, Vanity, Worldly-mindedness, and sensual Pleasures no more; and therefore he draws back from a holy Life, as it were from Death itself. But what is this to them who *have mortified the Flesh, with the Affections and Lusts?*——Consider also that these forbidden Pleasures are the great Impediments, both of our Holiness, and of our truest Pleasures. One

of the Reasons why God forbids them, is because they hinder us from better. And if for our own Good we must forsake them when we turn to God, we should therefore be the more willing to die, in order to be free from the Danger of them; and especially since Death will transmit us to infinitely greater Pleasures.

§ 10. (3) *I must also depart from the more rational Pleasures which I have enjoyed in this Body.* As for Instance——from *my pleasant Studies*, which are Delights far above those of sensual Sinners. But let me consider,—How small is our Knowledge compared with our Ignorance? How little does the Knowledge of the Learned differ from the Thoughts of a Child? As Trifles are the Matter of childish Knowledge, so artificial Words and Forms make up more of the Learning of the World, than is commonly understood. God and the Life to come are little better known by the Learned, and often much less, than by many of the Unlearned. Of how little Use is it, to know what is contained in many hundred Volumes that fill our Libraries, and have given their Authors the Name of *Virtuosi*; not for their having the Virtue to live to God, or overcome Temptations from the Flesh and the World, and secure their everlasting Hopes?—Much of our Reading and Learning, alas! does us more Harm than Good. Many a precious Hour is lost in them, that should be employed in higher Pursuits. To many, I fear, it is as unholy a Pleasure, as others take in thinking of Lands and Honours; only the more dangerous for being the less suspected. I know the Knowledge of natural Things is valuable, and may be sanctified, and made some Way useful

uſeful to my higheſt Ends, and I would be at any Expence to procure more. But I muſt earneſtly pray, *May the Lord forgive me the Hours that I have ſpent in reading Things leſs profitable, for the Sake of pleaſing a Mind that would fain know every Thing, inſtead of ſpending them for the Increaſe of Holineſs in myſelf and others.* Yet I muſt thankfully acknowledge to God, that *from my Youth he taught me to begin with Things of greateſt Weight, and to refer moſt of my other Studies thereto, and to ſpend my Days under the Motives of Neceſſity and Profit to myſelf, and thoſe that were committed to me.* I would have Men moſt reliſh that Learning in their Health, which they will find ſweeteſt in Sickneſs, and when near to Death.—And, alas! how expenſive a Vanity is this Knowledge? Tho' it little differs from a pleaſant Dream; yet, to attain a little Excellency in it, how many laborious Days and Weeks muſt it coſt us? *Much Study is a Wearineſs of the Fleſh, and he that increaſeth Knowledge increaſeth Sorrow.* What painful Diſeaſes, and Loſs of bodily Eaſe and Health, has it occaſioned me? What Envy and Oppoſition has it expoſed me to? And ſhould a Man be loth to die, for fear of leaving ſuch troubleſome, coſtly Learning and Knowledge?——Let me eſpecially conſider, that we ſhall certainly have a nobler, ſweeter, and more extenſive Knowledge, than is here attainable. *Love never fails*; and we can love no more than we know: *But Prophecies ſhall fail*; *Tongues ſhall ceaſe*; *Knowledge*, ſuch as we now have, *ſhall vaniſh away. When I was a Child, I ſpake as a Child, I underſtood as a Child, I thought as a Child*; *but when I became a Man, I put away childiſh Things. For now we ſee thro' a Glaſs darkly,*

then Face to Face; now I know in Part, but then shall I know, even as also I am known; for tho' my Knowledge will not be like that of the blessed God, it will be like that of holy Spirits. In order for a Physician to describe the Disease of his Patient, he needs much Reading and close Enquiry; and after all, he goes much upon Conjectures, and his Knowledge is mixt with many Uncertainties and Mistakes; but when he opens the Corps, his Knowledge is more full and true, and obtained with greater Ease and Speed. A Country-Man knows the Town, Fields, and Rivers, Plants and Animals, where he dwells, with Ease, Perspicuity, and Certainty; when mere Geographical Knowledge is liable to many Mistakes. So the Sight of God and Heaven will deserve the Name of *Wisdom*, while our present Glimpse is but *Philosophy*, or the Love of Wisdom. We should not therefore fear Death, for fear of losing our Knowledge; but rather long for the World of glorious Light, that we may get out of this Darkness into easy, joyful, and satisfying Knowledge.

§ 11. *Friendship* is one of the more rational Pleasures enjoyed in this Body, and from which I must depart. He that believes not that there are far more and better Friends in Heaven, than there are on Earth, believes not, as he ought, that there is a Heaven. Our Friends here are wise; but they are also unwise. They are faithful; but partly unfaithful. They are holy; but alas! too sinful. They have the Image of God; but it is blotted and dishonoured by their Faults. They do God and his Church much Service; but they also do too much for Satan, even when they intend the Honour of God.

God. They promote the Gospel; but they also hinder it by their Weakness and Ignorance, their Selfishness, Pride, and Passion, their Divisions and Contentions. They are our Helpers and Comforters; but how often are they also our Hindrance, Trouble, and Grief? In Heaven they are perfectly wise, and holy, and faithful; and there is Nothing in them, nor done by them, but what is amiable to God and Man.—With our faithful Friends we have here a Mixture of those that are useless and burthensome, or hypocritical and malicious. But in Heaven there are none but the Wise and the Holy; no Hypocrites, no burthensome Neighbours, no treacherous, oppressive, or persecuting Enemies.—Christ loved his Disciples, his Kindred, and all Mankind, and took Pleasure in doing Good to all; and so did his Apostles; but how poor a Recompence had he or they from any, but from God? Christ's *Brethren believed not on him. Peter denied him. All his Disciples forsook him and fled.* And what then could be expected from others?—No Friends have a perfect Suitableness to each other; and those Inequalities that are nearest to us, are most troublesome. So various and contrary are our Apprehensions, Interests, and Educations, our Tempers, Inclinations, and Temptations, that instead of wondering at the Discord and Confusions of the World, we may rather admire the Providence of God, which maintains so much Order and Concord. The greatest Crimes that have been charged upon me, have been those Things, which I thought to be my greatest Duties; and for those Parts of my Obedience to God and my Conscience, which cost me dearest; and where I pleased my Flesh least, I pleased the World least.

And is this tumultuous, militant World, a Place that I ſhould be loth to leave?

§ 12. I muſt depart from *all the Means of Grace*, tho' more precious to me than all earthly Enjoyments.—Shall I love the Name of Heaven, better than Heaven itſelf? Is not the Poſſeſſion of Glory, better than the Promiſe of it? If a Light and Guide thro' the Wilderneſs be good, ſurely the glorious End muſt be better. It hath pleaſed God that all Things on Earth, even the *ſacred Scriptures*, ſhould bear the Marks of our State of Imperfection. Imperfect Perſons were the Penmen. Imperfect human Language is the Conveyance. Heaven will not, to perfect Spirits, be made the Occaſion of ſo many Errors and Controverſies, as the Scriptures are to us imperfect Mortals. Yea, Heaven is the more deſirable becauſe there I ſhall better underſtand the Scriptures, than here I can ever hope to do. To leave my *Bible*, and go to the God and Heaven which the Bible reveals, will be no otherwiſe my Loſs, than to leave the Picture for the Preſence of my Friend.—As for mere *human Writings and Inſtructions*, the Pleaſure of my Mind is much abated by their great Imperfection; and why ſhould I think that *my own* are blameleſs? I muſt for ever be thankful for the holy Inſtructions and Writings of others, notwithſtanding human Frailty; and ſo muſt I be thankful that God hath made any Uſe of my own, for the Good of Souls, and the Edification of his Church. But how many Alloys are there to ſuch Comforts? If good Men, and good Books, or Sermons would make the World ſeem over-lovely, it will be the Mercy of God to abate the Temptation. When we are dead to the Love of the Godly themſelves, of Learning, Books, and Ordi-

Ordinances, so far as they serve a selfish Interest, and tempt our Hearts from heavenly Aspirations; then indeed *the World is crucified to us, and we to it.*

§ 13. Of all Things a departing Soul has least Cause to fear losing *the Knowledge of worldly Affairs.* ——If the Sun gives Light and Heat to the Earth, why should I think that blessed Spirits have no Acquaintance with earthly Concerns? From the Top of a Hill I can see more than from below; and shall I know less of Earth, from Heaven, than I do now? It is unlikely that my Capacity will be so little; or, that Christ and all the Angels will be so strange to me, as to give me no Notice of Things so interesting to my God and Redeemer, to the holy Society of which I am a Member, and to myself as a Member of that Society. Spirits are most active, and of quick and powerful Communication. They need not send Letters, nor write Books, nor lift up a Voice. And as Activity, so Unity is greatest, where there is most Perfection. Their Knowledge, Love, and Joy will be one. My celestial Advancement, therefore, will be no Diminution, but an inconceivable Increase of my desirable Knowledge of Things on Earth.—If, indeed, I shall know less of Things below, it will be because the Knowledge of them is a Part of *Vanity and Vexation*, which have no Place in Heaven. I need not be afraid to hear no more of bloody Wars, desolalated Countries, dissipated Churches, persecuted Christians, silenced Preachers, Party-Conflicts, contentious Divines, censorious Professors of Religion, with the Cries of the Poor, or the endless Complaints of the Melancholy.

§ 14. Nor need I fear, what other Men are pleaſed to ſuggeſt, that *the Church will want me.*— Is it I, or God, that muſt chuſe his Servants, and cut out their Work? Am I doing God's Work, or my own? If God's, muſt not he ſay what, and when, and how long? And will not his Will and Choice be beſt? If I believe not this, how do I take him for my God? Does God, or I, know beſt what is yet to be done, and who is fitteſt to do it? ——What am I to thoſe more excellent Perſons, whom in all Ages God hath taken out of the World? Have not many Servants of Chriſt died in their Youth, who were far more likely to win Souls, and glorifie God, than I am, or ever have been? And ſhall I at *Seventy ſix* Years of Age, after ſuch a Life of unſpeakable Mercies, and after almoſt *Fifty three* Years of comfortable Help in the Service of my Lord, be now afraid of my Reward, and ſhrink at the Sentence of Death, and ſtill be deſirous to ſtay here, under Pretence of farther Service? We know not what is beſt for the Church, as God does. The Church and the World are not our's, but his; not our Deſires, therefore, but his Will, muſt meaſure out its Mercies. Nothing ever lay ſo heavy on my Heart, as the Sin and Miſery of Mankind, and to think how much of the World lies in Folly and Wickedneſs. And for what can I ſo heartily pray, as for the World's Recovery? And it is his Will that I ſhould ſhew a holy and univerſal Love by praying, *Let thy Name be hallowed; Thy Kingdom come; Thy Will be done on Earth, as it is in Heaven.* Yet, alas! how unlike is Earth to Heaven? What Sin and Ignorance, Confuſions and Cruelties reign and proſper here? Without a won-

wonderful Change, even by a general Miracle, how little Hope appears, that ever these Prayers should be answered? Indeed it makes us better, to desire that others may be better; and God seems to permit the Ignorance and Confusions of this World, to help us the more to value and desire the World of Light, Love and Order.——If I am any Way useful to the World, undeserved Mercy hath made me so, for which I must be thankful; how long I shall be so, is not my Business to determine, but my Lord's. As God will be served and pleased by a wonderful Variety of Animals, and Vegetables; so he will by their successive Generations. If one Flower fall or die, others in future Summers shall arise from the same Root. God will have other Generations to succeed us; let us thank him that we have had our Time. And could we, without *Selfishness, love others as ourselves*, and *God as God*, it would comfort us at Death, to have others survive us, and the World continue, and God still be God, and be glorified in his Works. Love would say, "I shall live in my Successors; I shall more "than live in the Life of the World; and most of "all, in the eternal Life and Glory of God."—— Nor will God try us with too long a Life of Temptations, lest we should grow too familiar where we should be Strangers, and be utterly Strangers to our Home. No Wonder the World was ready for a Deluge, by a Deluge of Sin, when Men lived six, seven, eight, or nine hundred Years. Had our great Sensualists any Hope of living so long, they would be like incarnate Devils, there would be no Dwelling near them for the Godly.——Nor will God tire us with too long a Life of Afflictions.

And ſhall we grudge at the Wiſdom and Goodneſs which ſhortens them? Tho' holy Duties be excellent and delightful, yet the Weakneſs of the Fleſh makes us liable to Wearineſs, and abates the Willingneſs of the Spirit. By our Wearineſs and Complaints, our Fears and Groans, we ſeem to think this Life too long, and yet when we ſhould yield to the Call of God, we draw back, as if we would have it to be everlaſting,

§ 15. 'Willingly ſubmit then, O my Soul! It 'is not thyſelf, but this Fleſh that muſt be diſſol- 'ved; this troubleſome, vile, and corruptible Fleſh. 'Study thy Duty, work while it is Day, and let 'God chuſe thy Time, and willingly ſtand to his 'Diſpoſal. When I die, the Goſpel dies not;— 'the Church dies not;——the Praiſes of God die 'not;——the World dies not, but perhaps it will 'grow better, and thoſe Prayers be anſwered, 'which ſeemed to be loſt; and perhaps ſome of 'the Seed I have ſown, ſhall ſpring up when I am 'dead. If my End was to do Good, and glorifie 'God; when Good is done, and God is glorified, 'tho' I were annihilated, is not my End attained? "——Lord, *let thy Servant depart in Peace*; even "in thy Peace *which paſſeth all Underſtanding*, and "which Chriſt the Prince of Peace gives, and which "Nothing in the World can take away! O give "me that Peace which ſuits a Soul, who is ſo near "the Harbour, even the World of endleſs Peace and "Love! Call Home this Soul by the encouraging "Voice of Love, that it may joyfully hear, and ſay, "——It is my Father's Voice! Invite it to thee "by the heavenly Meſſenger! Attract it by the "Tokens and Foretaſtes of Love! The Meſſen-

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" gers that invited me to the *Feast* of Grace, *com-*
" *pelled me to come in* without Constraint; thy effec-
" tual Call made me willing. And is not Glory
" better than the Grace which prepares for it? Shall
" I not more willingly come to the celestial Feast?
" What was thy Grace for, but to make me desi-
" rous of Glory, and the Way to it? Why didst
" Thou dart down thy Beams of Love, but to
" make me love thee, to call me up to the ever-
" lasting Center? Was not the Feast of Grace, as
" a Sacrament of the Feast of Glory? Did I not
" take it in Remembrance of my Lord till he come?
" Did not he that told me;——*All Things are ready*,
" ——tell me also that——*He is gone to prepare a*
" *Place for us*, and that —— *he will have us to be*
" *with him and see his Glory?* They that are *given*
" *him*, and *drawn* to him, by the Father on Earth,
" do *come to Christ*; give now and draw my de-
" parting Soul to my glorified Head! As I have
" glorified Thee on Earth in the Measure of thy
" Grace bestowed upon me, pardon the Sins by
" which I have offended thee, and glorifie me in
" the Vision and Participation of my Redeemer's
" Glory! *Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly*, with ful-
" ler Life, and Light, and Love into this too dead,
" and dark, and disaffected Soul, that with joyful
" Willingness it may come unto thee!"

§ 16. ' Willingly *depart*, O lingering Soul! It
' is from a *Sodom*; tho' there be righteous *Lots*
' in it, they are not without their sad Blemishes.
' Hast thou so often lamented the general Blindness
' and Wickedness of the World, and art thou loth
' to leave it for a better? How often wouldst thou
' have rejoiced to have seen but the Dawning of a
' Day

'Day of universal Peace and Reformation? And 'wouldest thou not see it, where it shines in per-'fect Beauty? Hast thou prayed and laboured so 'hard, to have the Pleasure of a Light at Mid-'night; and is it not thy Desire to behold the Sun 'itself? Will the Things of Heaven please thee 'no where but on Earth, where they are least and 'weakest? Away, away! Vindictive Flames are 'ready to consume this sinful World. Sinners are '*treasuring up Wrath against the Day of Wrath.* '*Look not* then *behind thee.* Away from this unhap-'py World! *Press toward the Mark*; *looking for,* '*and hastening unto the Coming of the Day of God.*— 'As this World hath used thee, it would still do 'so. When thou hast fared best in it, no Thanks 'to it, but to God. If thou hast had manifold 'Deliverances and Preservations, and hast been fed 'with Angels Food, love not the Wilderness, but 'thy heavenly Guide, Protector, and Deliverer. '——Does God in great Mercy make Pain and 'Feebleness the Harbingers of Death, and wilt 'thou not understand their Business? Wouldst 'thou dwell with thy beloved Body in the Grave, 'where it will rot in loathsome Darkness? If not, 'why should it now, in its painful Langour, seem 'to thee a more pleasing Habitation, than the glo-'rious Presence of thy Lord? In the Grave it will 'be at Rest, nor at Night wish, O that it were 'Morning! nor in the Morning say, When will 'it be Night! And is this a Dwelling fit for thy 'Delight? Patience in it, while God will so try 'thee, is thy Duty; but is such Patience a better 'and sweeter Life, than Rest and Joy?'

§ 17.

§ 17. But, alas, how deaf is Flesh to Reason? I have Reason enough to be willing to depart, even much more willing than I am. O that I could be as willing, as Reason convinces me I ought to be! Could I love God as much as I know I ought to love him, then I should *desire to depart and to be with Christ*, as much as I know I ought to desire it. But Death must be a Penalty, even where it is a Gain; and therefore it must meet with some Unwillingness. Because we willingly sinned, we must unwillingly suffer. All the Faith and Reason in the World will not make Death to be no Penalty, and therefore will not take away all Unwillingness. No Man ever reasoned or believed himself into a Loveof Pain and Death as such. But since the Gain is unspeakably greater than the Pain and Loss, therefore Faith and holy Reason may make our Willingness greater than our Unwillingness, and our Hope and Joy than our Fear and Sorrow. 'Come then, my Soul, 'and think believingly what is *best* for thee [which 'will be the Subject of the next Chapter;] and 'wilt thou not love and desire that most, which is 'certainly best?'

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

Why it is far better to be with Christ.

§ 1. *It is far better, considering,* § 2. (1) *Our Preparation for it, by the Father's Love, the Son's Purchase, and the Spirit's Influences;* § 3. *by God's Word, Ordinances and Providences;* § 4. *and by various other Means:* § 5. (2) *It is the End of all our Preparation:* § 6. (3) *It perfects our Knowledge of God and his Works,* § 7. *of Christ and Redemption by him, of Heaven and Scripture,* § 8. *of Providence, of Ourselves, of our Fellow-Creatures, and of our Enemies, Sins, and Dangers:* § 9. (4) *It perfects our Will,* § 10, 11. *conforming it to the Will of God, and fixing it in his Love.* § 12. *The Author triumphs in the Prospect of such Happiness,* § 13. *traces it from God's Love as the Fountain,* § 14, 15. *thro' the Love of Christ as the Channel, and* § 16. *thro' Angels and Saints as subordinate Channels:* § 17. (5) *It perfects also our Activity in doing Good; particularly, in praising God and Christ, and* § 18. *in Beneficence to inferior Creatures.*

§. TO say, or hear, that *it is far better to be with Christ*, is not enough to make us willing. If I firmly believe that it is best for me,

I shall then desire it. And have I not Reason to believe it? Let me seriously consider for my full Conviction——*by what Means I am preparing for this Happiness*;——*how this Happiness is the End for which I am preparing*;——and *how it will perfect my Knowledge*,——*Will*, ——and *Activity in doing Good.*

§ 2. (1) *The Means by which I am preparing to be with Christ, abundantly shew that it is far better to be with him.* As for Instance;——*That is best for me, which my heavenly Father's Love designs and chuses for my Good.* I hope I shall never dare to say, or think, that he is mistaken, or that I could have chose better for myself. Many a Time hath the wise and good Will of God crossed my foolish rebellious Will, and afterward I have perceived it was best. It is not an Enemy, nor a Tyrant, that made me, preserves me, or calls me hence. The more I have tried him, the better I have found him. Had I better obeyed his ruling Will, how happy had I been! And is not his disposing and rewarding Will as good? If I should not die, till myself, or any of my dearest Friends, would have it, would this rejoice me? O foolish sinful Soul, is it not far better to be at God's Choice, than my own, or any Man's? 'Be of good Chear then, O my Soul! 'It is thy Father's Voice that calls thee hence: 'His Voice, that called thee into Being, and out 'of a State of Sin and Death, and bid thee live 'unto him: That called thee so often from the 'Grave, forgave thy Sins, renewed thy Strength, 'restored thee to the Comforts of his House and 'Service, and hath so graciously led thee thro' this 'howling Wilderness almost to the Sight of the

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'promised Land. And wilt thou not willingly go, 'when such infinite Love calls thee? Art thou not 'desirous of his Presence? Art thou afraid to go 'to him, who is the only Cure of thy Fears? What 'was it but this Glory, to which he elected thee? 'Not to the Riches and Honours of this World, 'or to the Pleasures of the Flesh, but *chose thee in 'Christ to an Inheritance in Glory?* If God chuse 'thee to Blessedness, refuse it not thyself, nor be-'have like a Refuser."——*That is my best State, which my Saviour purchased and promised as best.* As he bought me *not with Silver and Gold*, so neither did he live and die to make me rich and great in the World. Who have more of these than they that have least of Christ? Is it Heaven that cost so dear a Price as his Merits, Sacrifice, and Intercession? Is that the End of so wonderful a Design of Grace, and shall I now be unwilling to receive the Gift?——*That is best for me, for which God's holy Spirit is preparing me.* He is not persuading me from Day to Day to love the World, but to come off from it, and to set my Heart upon Things above. And would I now undo all, or cross and frustrate all his Operations? Has Grace been so long preparing me for Glory, and shall I be loth to take Possession of it? If I am not willing I am not yet sufficiently prepared.

§ 3.—*If Heaven be not better for me than Earth, God's Word and Ordinances have been all in vain.* Surely that is my Best, which is the Gift of the better Covenant; which is secured to me by so many sealed Promises; to which I am directed by so many sacred Precepts, Doctrines, and Examples; and for which I have been called to hear and read

read, meditate, watch and pray. Was it fleshly Interest, or a longer Life of worldly Prosperity, which the Gospel-Covenant secured to me; which the Sacraments and Spirit sealed to me; which the Bible was written to direct me to; which Ministers preached to me; which my Books were written for, and for which I prayed, and served God? Or was it not for his Grace on Earth, and Glory in Heaven? And is it not better for me to have the End of all these Means, than lose them and all my Hopes? Why have I used them, if I would not attain their End?——*That is my best State, to which all God's fatherly Providences tend.* All his sweeter Mercies, and sharper Corrections, are to make me *Partaker of his Holiness*, and lead me to Glory in the Way in which my Saviour and all his Saints have gone before me. *All Things work together for the best* to me, by preparing me for that which is best indeed. Both Calms and Storms are to bring me to this Harbour: If I take them but for themselves, and for this present Life, I mistake them, unthankfully vilifie them, and lose their End, Life, and Sweetness. Every Word and Work of God, every Day's Mercies and Changes, look at Heaven, and intend Eternity. God leads me no other Way: If I follow him not, I forsake my Hope in forsaking him: If I follow him, shall I be unwilling to be at Home, and arrive at the End of all this Way?

§ 4.——*Certainly that is best for me, which God requires me principally to value, love, and seek.* If my Business in the World be only for the Things of the World, how vain a Creature is Man, and how little is the Difference between waking and sleeping, Life and Death? And is it my Duty to seek Hea-

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ven with all the Fervor of my Soul, and Diligence of my Life, and is it not Beſt to find it?——*That muſt needs be Beſt for me, for the Sake of which all other Things muſt be forſook.* It is Folly to forſake the better for the worſe; but Scripture, Reaſon, and Conſcience tell me, that all this World ſhould be forſaken for the leaſt Hope of Heaven, when it comes in Competition. A poſſible everlaſting Glory ſhould be preferred before a certainly periſhing Vanity. I am ſure this Life will ſhortly be Nothing to me, and therefore it is next to Nothing now. And muſt I forſake all for my everlaſting Hopes, and yet be unwilling to enter on the full Poſſeſſion?——*That is like to be our Beſt, which is our moſt mature State.* Nature is ever tending towards Perfection. Every Fruit is beſt when it is ripe. And does God cauſe Saints to grow to greater Ripeneſs, only to be uſeleſs? It is not credible. Our *Souls return to God that gave them*; and tho' he needs them not, he puts them to ſuch heavenly Uſes, as their Maturity fits them for. Since Love has ripened me for itſelf, ſhall I not willingly drop into it's Hand?—*That is like to be Beſt, which has been moſt eſteemed and deſired by the Wiſeſt and Holieſt in all Ages, and which all Men at Death allow to be Beſt.* No Men are uſually worſe, than thoſe who have no Belief or Hope of a Life to come. And none are ſo holy, juſt, and ſober, ſo charitable to others, and ſo uſeful to Mankind, as thoſe who firmly believe, and hope for, a State of Immortality. And ſhall I fear ſuch a State?——*And is not that my beſt State, which moſt diſpleaſes my greateſt Enemies?* I need not ſay, how much Satan does to keep me and other Men from Heaven, and

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in order to that, how he tempts us with worldly Honour, Pleasure, and Wealth. Satan would not have me get to Heaven, and shall I also be unwilling?—All these Things tell me, that *it is Best to be with Christ.*

§ 5. (2) *As the End of all my Preparation, it must be far better for me to be with Christ.*——*Is not dwelling with God in Glory, far better than in this sinful World?* He that is our Beginning, is our End. For our End all Means are used. And the End attained is the Rest of Souls. How often has my Soul groaned under a Sense of Distance, Darkness, and Alienation from God? how often has it looked up, and panted after him, and said, *As the Hart panteth after the Water-Brooks, so panteth my Soul after thee, O God: My Soul thirsteth for God, for the living God; when shall I come and appear before God? Whom have I in Heaven but thee? and there is none upon Earth that I desire besides thee. It is good for me to draw near to God.* Woe to me, if I dissembled: If not, why should my Soul draw back? Is it because Death stands in the Way? Don't my Fellow-Creatures die for my daily Food? And is not my Passage secured by the Love of my Father, and the Resurrection and Intercession of my Lord? Can I see the Light of heavenly Glory in this darksome Shell and Womb of Flesh?——*All Creatures are more or less excellent and glorious, as God communicates most of himself to them.* They are said to be nearest to him, that have the noblest Natures. Therefore to be as near, as my Nature was intended to approach, is but to attain the End and Perfection of my Nature.——*As I am now under the Government of his Officers on Earth, so I expect to be in Heaven.*

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If the Law was given by Angels, and the Angel of God was in the burning Bush, and the Angel conducted the People thro' the Wilderness, and yet all these Things are ascribed to God; much more near and glorious will the Divine Government be in Heaven.——*Here I am made, ruled, and sanctified for the Good of many, as above my own.* I am sure I must be finally for my glorified Redeemer; and that he who is the first, will be the ultimate Cause. In this Respect I shall be as near him, as is due to the Rank and Order of my Nature. —— *It is the Honour of a Servant to have an honourable Master, and to be appointed to the most honourable Work.* My Advancement will be ultimately for God, and in such Services as are suitable to my spiritual and heavenly State.——*Activity will be my Perfection and my Rest.* Tho' now I know not fully what Service I must do, I know it will be good, and suitable to the blessed State I shall be in.——*It is not all the Use and Work of my Soul now, to care for my Body.* Nor will it be hereafter. Tho' I shall not always have a Body, I shall always have God, and a Saviour, and a World of Fellow-Creatures; and when I shine not in this Lanthorn, nor see as in a Glass, I shall yet see Face to Face.——*To fulfill God's Will here, would be the fulfilling of my own.* I am sure my Soul shall live, and that it shall live to God, and that I shall fulfill his blessed Will; and so far as I am pleased in doing it, it will be my Felicity.——*The Soul's regular Love to the Body illustrates the Love of Christ to his Church, and to every Member.* Herein my Saviour excells me in powerful faithful Love. He will save me better from Pain and Death, than I can save my Body, and will more inseparably hold

hold me to himself. If it pleases my Soul to dwell in such a House of Clay, how much more will it please my glorified Lord to dwell with his glorified Body, the Church triumphant, and to bless each Member of it? It would be a Kind of Death to Christ, to be separated from his Body. And will He take incomparably greater Pleasure in me for ever, than my Soul does in my Body? O then let me long to be with him! Tho' I am naturally loth to be absent from the Body, let me not be willingly absent from the Lord! And tho' *I would not be unclothed*, had not Sin made it necessary; let me *groan to be clothed upon with my heavenly Habitation*, to become the Delight of my Redeemer, and to be perfectly loved by Love itself!——*The Love and Delight of my glorified Head must be my Felicity.* I shall be loved as a living Spirit, and not as a Thing dead and insensible.—*If I must rejoice here with them that rejoice, shall I not rejoice to have my Lord rejoice in me, and in all his glorified ones?* Union will make his Pleasure to be much my own. It will fitly be said by him, *Enter thou into the Joy of thy Lord.*——*The Heavenly Society also will joyfully welcome a holy Soul.* If now *there is Joy in the Presence of the Angels of God, over one Sinner that repenteth*, what will there be over a perfect glorified Soul? If our *Angels* there *behold our Father's Face*, how glad will they be of our Company? And will not Love and Union make their Joy my own? Surely that will be my best Condition, which Angels and blessed Spirits will be best pleased with; and in that, in which they most rejoice, I shall most rejoice myself.

§ 6. (3) *It is far better for me to be with Christ, as thereby my Knowledge will be perfected.* A Soul that is

is *with Christ*, is more likely to know Christ, and the Father in him, than a Soul that is present with the Body, and absent from the Lord. What less can the Promise of being *with him* signifie?—— *How much more excellent will intuitive or immediate Knowledge be*, than our present artificial Knowledge? There will be no expensive Labour in getting it. It will have no Mixture of dark and bewildring Uncertainty and Ambiguity, when it is acquired. It will be perfectly free from those Contentions, which so much rob the Ingenious of their Time, destroy their Love, hinder their Minds from ascending to God and heavenly Things, and fill the Church with Sects and Parties. Nor will it leave any of that Dissatisfaction, so common among the Learned, while they have only the Shadow of Knowledge, licking but the Outside of the Glass, and leaving the Wine within untasted.——*What an Excellency will there be in each of the Objects of this immediate Knowledge?* As for Instance;——I shall *know God better*. If an Angel from Heaven came down on Earth to tell us all of God that we would know, who would not turn his Back on Libraries and Universities, to go and discourse with such a Messenger? For one Hour's Talk with him, what Travel should I think too far, what Cost too great? But here we must only have such Intimations, as will exercise Faith, excite Desire, and try us under the Temptations of the World and the Flesh. The Light of Glory is to reward the Victory obtained by the Conduct of the Light of Grace. God in great Mercy even here begins the Reward. They that *follow on to know the Lord*, usually find such Increase of Light, not consisting in vain Notions, but

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in the quickening and comforting Knowledge of God, as greatly encourages them, and draws them ſtill on to ſeek more. If the Pleaſure the Mind has in common Knowlege, makes Men ſpend ſucceſſive Years in traverſing Sea and Land, or in turning over Multitudes of tedious Volumes; who then upon Earth can poſſibly conceive how great a Pleaſure it will be for a glorified Soul to ſee the Lord? All the Pleaſure I ſhall have in Heaven in knowing any of the Works of God, will be in my beholding God himſelf, his Being, Wiſdom, Love, and Goodneſs in thoſe Works; for He is the Life and Glory of them all. *Bleſſed are the pure in Heart, for they ſhall ſee God.*——And doubtleſs it will be no ſmall Part of my Delight to *know the Univerſe better*. It is exceeding pleaſant to know the leaſt Particle of the Works of God. With what Diligence and Delight have Men endeavoured to anatomize a Body, yea a ſmall Part of a Carcaſs; or to know and deſcribe Worms and Inſects, Plants and Minerals? But no Man ever yet perfectly knew the Nature and Uſes of the leaſt of them: If indeed we clearly ſaw the Nature and Connection of every Creature in Sea or Land, what a delightful Spectacle would this little Spot of the Creation be? How much more to ſee the whole Creation? And I ſhall have as much of this, as I ſhall be capable of; the Wonders of God's Works ſhall raiſe my Soul in admiring joyful Praiſe for ever. We have Deſires after ſuch Knowledge in our preſent dark and Infant State; for *the Works of the Lord are great, ſought out of all them that have Pleaſure therein.* As theſe Deſires are of God; as he hath made his Works to be known for his Glory; and as it is little that is known of

them by Mortals; therefore they are known by them in Heaven, who are fitted to improve that Knowledge to his Praiſe. If Chriſt, the Wiſdom of God, will teach me the true Philoſophy, how to love God, and pleaſe him in all Things here, I ſhall quickly in Heaven be a perfect Philoſopher. Satan tempted Chriſt by *ſhewing him all the Kingdoms of the World, and the Glory of them*, and promiſing to *give him all, if he would worſhip him*: But God will ſhew me more, than Satan could ſhew; and give me more of that which is beſt, than Satan could give.

§ 7.——Nor will it be the leaſt of my Felicity in Heaven, that I ſhall *better know Jeſus Chriſt, and all the Myſtery of our Redemption by him.* O beatifying Knowledge, to know him *in whom are hid all the Treaſures of Wiſdom and Knowledge!* To know the Myſtery of his eternal Godhead, of his created Nature, and of the Union of both, and to ſee God's wonderful Deſign, and gracious Work in him laid open to our cleareſt View! Then all the dark Texts concerning his Perſon, Offices, and Works, will be fully underſtood. All thoſe ſtrange and difficult Things, which were the great Exerciſe and Honour of Faith, will then be plain. Difficulties will no more be Satan's Advantage to tempt us to Unbelief or Doubting. The Sight of the Glory of my Lord will be my Glory. If now, *tho' we ſee not Chriſt, yet believing, we love him, and rejoice in him with Joy unſpeakable and full of Glory*; what Love and Joy will the everlaſting Sight of our bleſſed Head, excite there in the Souls of all the Glorified?—I ſhall *better* (O how much better!) *know the heavenly Jeruſalem, the triumphant Church,*

the

the blessed Angels and glorified Saints. What a Sight, what a joyful Sight will Death shew me, by drawing aside the Veil! Or rather the Lord of Life, by turning Death to my Advantage! As I now know the several Rooms in my House, so shall I then know the *many Mansions*, which Christ says *are in his Father's House.* If *Nehemiah* and the pious *Jews* rejoiced so much at seeing the Walls of *Jerusalem* repaired, and others at the Re-building the Temple, O what a joyful Sight shall I have of the heavenly *Jerusalem!* I know that Angels now love us, *minister unto us*, rejoice in our Good, and are themselves far more holy and excellent Creatures than we are; it is therefore my Comfort to think that I shall better know them, and live in near and perpetual Acquaintance and Communion with them, and bear my Part in the same Choir in which they preside. And when I think how sweet one wise and holy Companion has been to me here on Earth, and how lovely his Graces have appeared; O what a Sight will it be, when we shall see the Millions of *the Spirits of Just Men made perfect*, shining with Christ in perfect Wisdom and Holiness! If this World was full of wise, just, and holy Persons, how lovely would it be? If one Kingdom consisted of such, it would make us loth to die, and leave such a Country; were it not that the more the Beauty of Goodness appears, the more the Perfection of it is desired. It is pleasant to me to pray in Hope, that *Earth may be made more like Heaven*, which is now become so like Hell. But when I shall see the Society perfected in Number, Holiness, and Glory, employed in the high and joyful Praises of Jehovah; the Glory of God, and the Lamb

ſhining on them, and God rejoicing over them as his Delight, and myſelf partaking of the ſame, That will be the truly bleſſed Day. And why does my Soul, impriſoned in Fleſh, no more deſire it?—— I ſhall *better underſtand all the Word of God.* Tho' I ſhall not have that Uſe for it as I now have in this Life of Faith, yet I ſhall ſee more of God's Wiſdom, and Goodneſs, Love, Mercy, and Juſtice appearing in it, than ever Man on Earth could do. As the Creatures, ſo the Scriptures, are perfectly known only by perfect Spirits. I ſhall then know how to ſolve all Doubts, reconcile all ſeeming Contradictions, and expound the hardeſt Prophecies. That Light will ſhew me the admirable Method of thoſe ſacred Words, where dark Minds now ſuſpect Confuſion. How joyfully ſhall I then praiſe my God and Saviour for giving his Church ſo clear a Light to guide them thro' this darkſome Wilderneſs, and ſo ſure a Promiſe to ſupport them till they come to Life eternal? How joyfully ſhall I bleſs him, who by that immortal Seed regenerated me to the Hopes of Glory, and ruled me by ſo holy and juſt a Law?

§ 8.——In that World of Light I ſhall *better underſtand God's Works of Providence.* The Wiſdom and Goodneſs of them is little underſtood in ſmall Parcels. It is the Union and Harmony of all the Parts which diſplays the Beauty of them. And no one can ſee the *Whole* together but God, and they that ſee it in the Light of his celeſtial Glory. Then I ſhall clearly know why God proſpered the Wicked, and ſo much afflicted the Righteous: Why he ſet up the Ungodly, and put the Humble under their Feet: Why he permitted ſo much Ignorance, Pride,

Pride, Luſt, Oppreſſion, Perſecution, Falſhood, and other Sins in the World: Why the Faithful are ſo few; and why ſo many Kingdoms of the World are left in Heatheniſm, Mahometaniſm, and Infidelity. I ſhall know why I ſuffered what I did, and how many great Deliverances I had, and how they were accompliſhed. All our Miſinterpretations of God's Works and Permiſſions, will then be rectified, and all our Controverſies about them be at an End.—Among all theſe Works, I ſhall eſpecially *know more of the Nature and Excellency of God's Mercies.* The lively Senſe of Love and Mercy, makes lively Chriſtians abound in Love to God, and in Mercy to others; but the Enemy of God and Man labours to obſcure and diminiſh our Views of divine Love and Mercy. Ingratitude is great Miſery, as Gratitude is true Pleaſure. We now receive Thouſands of Mercies, which we undervalue. But when I come to the State and Work of perfect Gratitude, I ſhall perfectly know all the Mercies ever received by myſelf, by my Neighbours and Friends, by the Church and the World. Mercies remembered muſt be the Matter of our everlaſting Thanks, and we cannot be perfectly thankful for them, without a perfect Knowledge of them. The Worth of Chriſt, and all his Grace, of the Goſpel, and of all divine Ordinances, and Church-Priviledges, of our Books, and our Friends, our Health, and all the Conveniences of our Lives, will be better underſtood in Heaven, than the moſt holy or thankful Chriſtian ever underſtood them here. —— Then I ſhall be *much better acquainted with myſelf.* I ſhall know the Nature of Souls, and the Way of their Operations, and how

the Spirit of God works upon them, and how that Spirit is ſent from Chriſt to work upom them. I ſhall know what Meaſure of Grace I myſelf had, and how far I was miſtaken concerning it. I ſhall know more of the Number and Greatneſs of my Sins, and of my Obligations to pardoning and healing Grace. Yea, I ſhall know more of my Body, as the Habitation of my Soul, and how far it helped or hindered me, and what were all it's Diſeaſes, and how wonderfully God ſupported, preſerved, and often delivered me.——I ſhall *alſo far better know my Fellow-Creatures.* The Good and Bad, the Sincere and the Hypocrites will there be diſcerned. Actions that were here thought honourable, will then be found to be odious and unjuſt; and Wickedneſs will no more be flattered or extenuated. Many a good and holy Work, which was reproached as criminal, will there be juſtified, honoured, and rewarded.——Once more, I ſhall *better know from what Enemies, Sins, and Dangers I was here delivered:* What Stratagems of Satan and his Inſtruments God defeated: How many Snares I eſcaped: And how great my Deliverance by Chriſt is from the Wrath to come.—All this Knowledge will thus be advanced to my glorified Soul, beyond my preſent Conceptions; and is it not therefore *far better to be with Chriſt?*

§ 9. (4) *It is far better for me to be with Chriſt, for the Sake of having my Will perfected.* The Will is to the Soul, what the Heart is to the Body. My greateſt Evil is there, and there will be my greateſt Good. Satan did moſt againſt it, and God will do moſt for it. When I am with Chriſt, my Will will no more be tied to a *Body*, which is now the grand Snare

Snare and Enemy of my Soul, by drawing my Love and Care, my Fears and Sorrows to itself, and turning them from my highest Interest. There my Will shall not be tempted by a *World* of inferior Good; nor shall Meat and Sleep, Possessions and Friends be my Snares and Dangers; nor shall the Mercies of God be the Tempter's Instruments; nor shall I have the Flatteries or Frowns of Tyrants; nor will bad Company infect or divert me; nor the Errors of good Men seduce me; nor the Reputation of the wise and learned draw me to imitate them in any Sin. There will be none of *Satan*'s Solicitations, to pervert my Will.

§ 10. My Will shall there be better than here, as it shall have *Nothing in it displeasing to God*, no sinful Inclination, no striving against God's Spirit, no grudging at any Word or Work of God, nor any Principle of Enmity or Rebellion left. There it shall have *no Inclination to injure my Neighbour*, or to do any Thing against the common Good. And there it shall have *Nothing in it opposite to itself*; no more *Law of my Members warring against the Law of my Mind*; no more Contrariety between Sense and Reason; but all will be Unity and Peace within.

§ 11. There *Christ will have perfectly sanctified my Will*, and made it conformable to his own, and to his Father's Will. This is at least his Meaning, when he prays, *That all his Disciples may be one, as Thou, Father, art in me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us, that they may be one, even as we are one.* I shall love and will, the same that God loves and wills. And how can the Will of Man have greater Honour? Assimilation to an earthly King is ho-

nourable; much more to Angels; but moſt of all to be like God. Indeed here the divine Image in us is, in its Degree, a Conformity to the Will of God. But, alas, how many thouſand Wiſhes and Deſires have we had, which are againſt the Will of God! We ſhall have the full Impreſſion of God's Will in Heaven, as Face anſwers to Face in a Glaſs, or the Wax to the Seal, or the Finger of the Clock to the Motion within, or as the Eccho to the Voice. I ſhall deſire, and never be diſappointed. I ſhall have as much Love and Joy as I wiſh. Before I deſire any Thing, I ſhall know whether it be God's Will or not, and therefore ſhall never wiſh any Thing that ſhall not be accompliſhed.—Yea my Will ſhall be my Enjoyment; for it ſhall not be the Deſire of what I want, but a Complacency in what I poſſeſs. I ſhall want Nothing. *I ſhall thirſt no more.* Rightly is the Will itſelf called Love. My Will ſhall be full of perfect Joy, when enjoying Love and Pleaſure will be my Will. Thus ſhall I have in myſelf *a Spring of living Waters.* ——My Will ſhall be confirmed and fixed in this Conformity to the Will of God. Now, both Underſtanding and Will are ſo lamentably mutable, that, farther than God promiſes to uphold us, we know not one Day, what we ſhall think, judge, or will the next. But when Love becomes our fixed Nature, we ſhall be no more weary of loving, than the Sun of ſhining.——God himſelf will be the full and everlaſting Object of my Love. Perfect joyful Complacency in God, is the Heaven which I deſire and hope for. In God there is all, that Love can deſire for its full everlaſting Feaſt. The Naure of Man's Will is to love Good as Good. God, who

who is infinitely good in himself, will be that most suitable Good to me. He has all in himself that I need or can desire. There is nothing for Love to cleave to, either above him, beyond him, or without him. He is willing to be beloved by me. He disdains not my Love. He might have refused such Affections, as have so often embraced Vanity and Filth. But he commands my Love, and makes it my greatest Duty. He invites and intreats me, as if he were a Gainer by my Happiness. He seeks to me to seek to him, and is both the first and most earnest Suiter. He that so valued my cold imperfect Love to him on Earth, will not reject my perfect Love in Heaven. And he is near to me, not a distant God, out of my Reach, nor unsuitable to my Love. Blind Unbelievers may dream that he is far off; but even now he is as nigh to us, as we are to ourselves. When he would sanctifie us to love him, he brings us nigh to himself in Christ. Here we see him in his Works and Word; and there we shall see him in all the perfect Glory of his Works, and shall delightfully love that glorious Perfection of the Universe, even the Image of God in all the World. I shall especially love the holy Society, the triumphant universal Church, consisting of Christ, Angels, and Saints. God himself loves them more than his inferior Works, and my Love, according to its Measure, will imitate his.

§ 12. 'Think here, O my Soul, how sweet thy 'Condition will be, to love the Lord Jesus thy glo-'rified Head with perfect Love! When the Glory 'of God which shines in him, will feast thy Love 'with full and everlasting Pleasure! The highest

'created Perfection of Power, Wisdom, and Good-
'ness, refulgent in him, will not permit thy Love
'to cease, or abate its Fervour. When thou shalt
'see in the glorified Church, the precious Fruits
'of Christ's redeeming Grace and Love; and when
'thou shalt feel thyself possest of perfect Happiness,
'by his Love to thee; and shalt remember what he
'did for thee, and in thee here on Earth; how he
'*called thee with a holy Calling*; how he *washed thee*
'*in his Blood from all thy Sins*; how he kindled in
'thee Desires after Glory; how he renewed thy
'Nature; how he instructed, guided, and preserved
'thee from Sins, Enemies, and Sufferings; all this
'will constrain thee everlastingly to love him.——
'Think also, O my Soul, how delightful it will be
'to love those Angels, who most fervently love the
'Lord! They will be lovely to thee, as they have
'loved thee; and more as they have been Lovers
'of the Church and of Mankind; but far more as
'they are so many refulgent Stars which continu-
'ally move, and shine, and burn in perfect Love
'to their Creator. O blessed Difference between
'that amiable Society, and this dark, distracted,
'wicked World! There I shall see or hear no Evil;
'no Mixture of Folly or Pollution; no false Doc-
'trine; no bad Example; no favouring Wicked-
'ness; nor accusing Goodness; nor hurtful Vio-
'lence; but holy powerful active Love will be all,
'and do all, as their very Nature, Life, and Work.
'And is not a Day with them, better than a thou-
'sand here?——And with holy Angels, I shall al-
'so love holy Souls, that are *made like them*, and
'joined with them in the same Society. All their
'Infirmities are there put off, and they also are
'Spirits

'Spirits made up of holy Life, and Light, and Love. 'When I think, with what fervent Love to God, 'to Jesus Christ, and to one another, they will be 'perfectly united there, grieve and blush, O my 'Soul, that they should here be so disaffected and 'divided, and hardly agree to call each other the 'Servants of God, or to worship God in the same 'Assemblies! The imperfect Image of God upon 'them is amiable, but thro' their remaining Pride, 'Error, and Uncharitableness, it is hard to live 'with some of them in Peace. O how delightful 'will that Communion of Saints be, where perfect 'Love shall make them one! Forget not, my Soul, 'how sweet God has made the Course of my Pil-'grimage, by the Fragrance and Usefulness of his 'Servants' Graces! How sweet have my Bosom-'Friends been! How sweet the Neighbourhood of 'the Godly! How sweet their holy Assemblies, 'their Writings, Conference, and Prayers! What 'then will it be to live in perfect Love with perfect 'Saints in Heaven for ever, and with them perfect-'ly to love the God of Love?'

§ 13. As the Act and Object of Love will constitute my future Felicity, I shall not be the Fountain of my own Delights, but *my receiving from the Love of God and his Creatures shall be sweeter to me than my own Activity.* All Love is communicative, but none compared with God's. Whatever Good is done in the World, it is done by Love. Therefore Parents care and provide for Children. Therefore my House and Table are not neglected, nor my Books and Learning forgot, nor my Friends despised, nor my Life itself thrown away. If a Man love not his Country, Posterity, and the common

Good, he will be as a Drone in the Hive. And if created Love be ſo neceſſary, ſo active, and communicative, much more will the infinite Love of the Creator. His Love is now the Life of Nature in the Living, the Life of Holineſs in the Saints, and the Life of Glory in thoſe that are glorified. In this Love I and all the Saints ſhall dwell for evermore. And if I dwell in Love, and Love in me, ſurely I ſhall *ever drink of the Rivers of Pleaſure*. Had I a great, wiſe, and good Friend that did for me but the Hundredth Part of what God does, how dearly ſhould I love him? 'Think then, 'think believingly, ſeriouſly, conſtantly, O my 'Soul, what a Life thou ſhalt live for ever in the 'Preſence and Boſom of infinite eternal Love! He 'now ſhineth on me by the Sun, and on my Soul, 'by the Sun of Righteouſneſs, but it is as thro' the 'Creviſes of my darkſome Habitation; but then he 'will ſhine on me, and in me, openly and with 'the fulleſt Streams and Beams of Love.' God is the ſame God in Heaven as on Earth, but I ſhall not be the ſame Man. Here the Windows of my Soul are not open to his Light; Sin has raiſed Clouds, and conſequently Storms againſt my Comforts. The Entrances to my Soul by the Straits of Fleſh and Senſe are narrow, and they are made narrower by Sin than they were by Nature. Alas, how often would Love have ſpoke comfortably to me, and I was not at Home to be ſpoke with, but abroad among a World of Vanities; or was not at Leiſure; or was aſleep, and not willing to be awaked! How often would Love have come in, and dwelt with me, and I have unkindly ſhut him out! How often would he have freely entertained me in

ſecret,

ſecret, but I had ſome trifling Company or Buſineſs which I was loth to leave! When his Table has been ſpread for me, and Chriſt, Grace, and Glory offered to me, how has my Appetite been gone or dull! He would have been All to me, if I would have been All for him. But in Heaven I ſhall have none of thoſe Obſtructions. All old Unkindneſs and Ingratitude will be forgiven. I ſhall then be wholly ſeparated from the Vanity which here deceived me. I ſhall joyfully behold the open Face, and attend the charming Voice of glorifying Love, and delightfully reliſh his celeſtial Proviſions. No Diſeaſe will corrupt my Appetite. No Sluggiſhneſs will renew my guilty Neglects. *The Love of the Father, the Grace of the Son, and the Communion of the holy Spirit*, will triumph over all my Folly, Deadneſs, and Diſaffection; and my God-diſpleaſing and Self-undoing Averſeneſs and Enmity will be gone for ever. 'Study this heavenly Work of 'Love, O my Soul! Theſe are not dead or barren 'Studies. It is only Love that can reliſh Love, and 'underſtand it. Here the Will has it's Taſte. 'What can poor carnal Worldlings know of glo-'rious Love, who ſtudy it without Love? What '*ſounding Braſs or tinkling Cymbals* are they, that 'preach of God, and Chriſt, and heavenly Glory 'without Love? But, gazing on the Face of Love in 'Chriſt, taſting its Gifts, contemplating its glorious 'Reign, is the Way to kindle the ſacred Fire in 'thee. The burning Glaſs muſt be turned direct-'ly to the Sun, in Order to its ſetting any Thing 'on Fire. A holy Love like that in Heaven, muſt 'be ſtudiouſly fetched from Heaven, and be kind-'led by the Foreſight of what is there, and what

'we

'we ſhall be there for ever. Faith muſt aſcend, 'and look within the Vail. Thou, my Soul, muſt 'not live as a Stranger to thy Home and Hopes, 'to thy God and Saviour. The Fire that muſt 'warm thee is in Heaven, and thou muſt come 'near it, and open thyſelf to its Influence, if thou 'wilt feel its powerful Efficacy. It is Night and 'Winter with carnal Minds, when it is Day and 'Summer with thoſe that ſet their Faces Heaven-'ward.'

§ 14. But in Heaven God will make Uſe of ſecond Cauſes, even in communicating his Love and Glory. There the Lord Jeſus Chriſt will not only be the Object of our delightful Love, but *his Love to us will be as the vital Heat and Motion of the Heart to all the Members, the Root of our Life and Joy.* Did his Tears for a dead *Lazarus* make Men ſay, *Behold how he loved him!* What then will the reviving Beams of heavenly Life, make us ſay of that Love, which fills us with the Pleaſures of his Preſence, and turns our Souls into Joy itſelf? 'Believe, 'O my Soul, thy Saviour's Love, that thou mayſt 'have a Foretaſte of it, and be fit for compleat En-'joyment. Let thy believing be ſo much of thy 'daily Work, that thou mayſt ſay, *he dwells in* '*thy Heart by Faith*, and *lives in thee*, and that thy '*Life in the Fleſh* is not a fleſhly Life, but *by the* '*Faith of the Son of God, who loved thee, and gave* '*himſelf for thee.* Look upon the Sun, and think 'with thyſelf, how its Motion, Light, and Heat 'are communicated to Millions of Creatures all 'over the Earth, and in the Seas. What if all 'theſe Beams of Light and Heat were proportion-'able Beams of perfect Knowledge, Love, and 'Joy?

'Joy? If all the Creatures under the Sun received 'from it as much Wisdom, Love, and Joy, as 'they have of Light, Heat, and Motion, what a 'blessed World would it be, even a Heaven upon 'Earth? Thus will the Sun of Glory send forth 'Life, Light, and joyful Love on all the heavenly 'Inhabitants. Therefore now begin to live upon 'the Influence of his Grace, that thou mayst have 'his Name and Mark.' He has not bid me seek his Grace in vain. He more than bids me *seek and ask.* He teaches me to pray. He makes my Prayers, and writes them on my Heart. He gives me Desires, and he loves to have me importunate with him, and is displeased with me that I will ask, and have, no more. How then comes my Soul to be yet so fond of this wretched Flesh and World, and so backward to go Home, and dwell with Christ? Alas, a Taste of Heaven on Earth is too precious to be cast away upon such as have long grieved and quenched the Spirit, and are not, by diligent and patient seeking, prepared to receive it! My Conscience remembers the Follies of my Youth, and many a later odious Sin, and tells me, that if Heaven were quite hid from my Sight, and I should never have a Glimpse of the Face of glorious eternal Love, it would be just. I look upward from Day to Day, and, better to know my God, and my Home, I cry to him daily. "My God, my Hopes "are better than all the Possessions of this World! "far better than all the Pleasures of Sin! Thy "gracious Looks have often revived me, and thy "Mercies have been unmeasurable to my Soul and "Body. But O! how far am I short of what, "even *Forty Years* ago, I hoped sooner to have at-

"tained?

" tained? Where is *the Peace that passeth all Un-*
" *derstanding*, which should *keep my Heart and*
" *Mind thro' Christ Jesus?* Where is the *seeing*,
" *longing, and rejoicing Faith?* Where is that
" pleasant Familiarity with Christ and Heaven,
" that would make a Thought of them sweeter
" than the Thoughts of Friends, Health, or all
" the Prosperity and Pleasure of this World? Do
" those that *dwell in God, and God in them*, and
" have their *Hearts and Conversation in Heaven*, at-
" tain no more clear and satisfying Perceptions of
" that blessed State, than I have yet attained? Is
" there no livelier Sense of future Joys? no swee-
" ter Foretaste? nor fuller silencing of Doubts and
" Fears? Alas, how many of thy Servants are less
" afraid to go to a Prison, than to their God; and
" had rather be banished to a Land of Strangers,
" than sent to Heaven! Must I, that am called *thy*
" *Child*, and an *Heir of Heaven*, and a *Co-heir*
" *with Christ*, have no more Acquaintance with
" my glorified Lord, and no more Love to thee
" who art *my Portion*, before I go hence? shall I
" have no more of the heavenly Life and Light,
" and Love? Alas, I have scarce enough in my
" Meditations, or Prayers, or Sermons, to denomi-
" nate them *Heavenly!* And must I go hence so
" like a Stranger to my Home? Wilt thou take
" Strangers into Heaven, and know them there as
" thine, that know thee no better here? O my
" God, vouchsafe a Sinner yet more of the Spirit
" of thy Son, who came to Earth, to call up earth-
" ly Minds to God, and to open Heaven to all Be-
" lievers! What do I beg, so frequently, so ear-
" nestly, for the Sake of my Redeemer, as the
" *Spirit*

" *Spirit of Life and Consolation*, to shew me the
" reconciled Face of God, and unite all my Af-
" fections to my glorified Head, and draw up this
" dark drowsy Soul to love, and long to be with
" thee ?"

§ 15. Alas ! tho' these are my daily Groans, how little do I ascend ? I dare not blame the God of Love, nor my blessed Saviour, nor the Sanctifier and Comforter of Souls. Undoubtedly the Cause is, my sinful Resistance of the Spirit, my unthankful Neglects of Grace and Glory. But Mercy can forgive; Grace can overcome; and may I not hope for such a Victory before I die ? " Lord, I will lie at thy Doors, and
" pour out my Complaints before thee ! Thou hast
" told us, how kindly the Dogs licked the Sores
" of a *Lazarus*, that lay at a rich Man's Gate ;
" thou hast commended the good *Samaritan*, for
" taking Care of a wounded Man ; thou sayest,
" *Blessed are the Merciful* ; thou commandest us,
" *Be merciful, as your heavenly Father is merciful* ;
" And shall I wait at thy Doors in vain ? Give me
" the Wedding-Garment, without which I shall
" but dishonour thy Feast ! Thou hast commanded
" me to *rejoice*, and how fain would I in this obey
" thee ? O that I had more faithfully obeyed thee
" in ruling my Senses, my Thoughts, my Tongue,
" and in the diligent Improvement of all my Ta-
" lents ! Then I might more easily have rejoiced.
" Lord, help my Love and Joy ! How can I re-
" joice in Death and Darkness ? I hoped I was
" long since *translated from the Kingdom of Darkness*,
" *and delivered from the Power of the Prince of Dark-*
" *ness, and brought into that Light which is the En-*
" *trance of the Inheritance of Saints* ; and yet, alas,
" Dark-

" Darkneſs is ſtill my Miſery! There is Light
" round about me, in thy Word and Works, but
" Darkneſs is within me. And if my Eye be
" dark, the Sun will be no Sun to me. What is
" my Unbelief, but the Darkneſs of my Soul?
" Lord Jeſus, ſcatter all theſe Miſts! O thou Sun
" of Righteouſneſs, make thy Way into this be-
" nighted Mind! O ſend thy Advocate, to ſi-
" lence every Temptation againſt thy Truth and
" Thee, to proſecute thy Cauſe againſt thy Ene-
" mies and mine, and to witneſs my Sonſhip and
" Salvation! I know, my Lord, Heaven is not
" far from me, no, not a Day, or an Hour's Jour-
" ney to a ſeparate Soul. How quick is the Com-
" munion of my Eyes with the diſtant Sun? And
" couldſt thou not ſhew me Heaven in a Moment?
" Is not Faith a ſeeing Grace? If animated by
" thee, it can *ſee the inviſible God*, the unſeen
" World, the *new Jeruſalem, the innumerable Com-*
" *pany of Angels, and the Spirits of juſt Men made per-*
" *fect: Without thee*, it *can do Nothing*, and is No-
" thing. Forgive all my Sins, and remove this
" Film that Sin has gathered, and my enlightened
" Soul will ſee thy Glory! I know this Vail of
" Fleſh muſt alſo be rent, before I ſhall ſee thee
" with open Face, and know my Fellow-Citizens
" above, as I am known. It is not Heaven on
" Earth I am asking, but that I may ſee it from
" Mount *Nebo*, and have the Pledge and the Firſt-
" Fruits; and that my Faith and Hope may kindle
" Love and Deſire, and make me *run my Race*
" *with Patience*, and live and die in the Joy which
" becomes an Heir of Heaven! But if my Part on
" Earth muſt not increaſe, let it make me the
" more

" more weary of this Dungeon, and more fervent-
" ly wish for the Day, when all my Desires shall
" be satisfied, and my Soul be filled with thy Light
" and Love !"

§ 16. And in Subordination to Christ, I shall also *be a Receiver in Heaven from Angels and Saints.* If Angels are greatly useful to me here, much more will they be there, where I shall be more capable of receiving from them. It will be no more Diminution to the Honour of Christ, to make Use of my Fellow-Creatures to my Joy there, than it was here. How gloriously will God shine in the Glory of the Blessed ? How delightful will it be to see their Perfection in Wisdom, Holiness, and Love ? They will love incomparably better than our dearest Friends on Earth can, who can only pity us in our Pains, and go weeping with our Corpses to the Grave; but the Friends above will joyfully convoy, or welcome our Souls to their triumphant Society. What a glorious State will it be, when all the Love of Angels and Saints in full Perfection, shall be so united, as to make one Love to one God, and to each other as made one in Christ ? We little know how great a Mercy it is here, to be commanded to love our Neighbours as ourselves ; and much more to be effectually *taught of God to love one another.* Did we all live in such unfeigned Love, Earth would resemble Heaven. ' Go then, go willing-
' ly, O my Soul ! Love joins with Light to draw
' up thy Desires. Art thou a Lover of Wisdom, Ho-
' liness, and Love, and wouldst thou not be united
' to the wise and holy who are made up of Love ?
' Art thou a Hater of Discord and Divisions on
' Earth, and wouldst thou not be, where all the
' Just

'Just are one? Is not thy Body, while kept together by an uniting Soul, in a better State than when it is crumbled into lifeless Dust? and does not Death creep on thee by a gradual Dissolution! Away then from this incoherent State! The farther from the Center, the farther from Unity. It is now thy Weakness and Imperfection, which makes thee so desirous that thy House, thy Land, thy Cloaths, thy Books, yea thy Knowledge and Grace, should be thine, and thine only. How much more excellent, if thou couldst say, that all these, like the Light of the Sun, are mine, and every one's as well as mine? In Heaven, thy Knowledge, thy Goodness, thy Glory and Felicity shall be thine, and others as well as thine. The Knowledge, Goodness, and Glory of all that perfect Society, shall be thine, as far as thy Capacity extends. Then hasten upwards, O my Soul, with thy most fervent Desires, and breathe after that State with thy strongest Hopes, where thou shalt not be rich, and see thy Neighbours poor; nor be poor, while they are rich; nor be well while they are sick; nor sick while they are well!' Communion as it constitutes the very Being of the City of God, will be Part of every one's Felicity, and none will have the less for the Participation of the rest. This *celestial Communion of Saints* in one holy Church, above what is here attainable, is now an Article of our Belief; but believing will soon end in seeing and enjoying.

§ 17. (5) *It is also far better for me to be with Christ, that I may have a perfect Activity in doing Good.* There are good Works in Heaven, and far more and better than on Earth. There will be more Life and Power

Power for Action; more Love to God and one another, to excite to Action; more Likeness to God and Christ in doing Good, as well as being good; more Union with the beneficent Jesus, to make us also beneficent; and more Communion, by each contributing to the Welfare of the Whole, and sharing in their common Returns to God. What the heavenly Works are, we must perfectly know when we come thither.——*We shall join with the whole Society*, as Scripture particularly describes, *in giving Thanks and Praise to God and our Redeemer.* All Passions earnestly desire to be freely exercised, especially our holy Affections of Love, Joy, and Admiration of Almighty God. In expressing such Affections, we naturally desire Communion with many. Methinks when we are singing the Praises of God in great Assemblies with joyful and fervent Spirits, I have the liveliest Foretaste of Heaven upon Earth, and could almost wish that our Voices were loud enough to reach thro' all the World, and to Heaven itself. Nor could I ever be offended with the sober and seasonable Use of instrumental Musick, to help to tune my Soul in so holy a Work, in which no true Assistance is to be despised. Nothing comforts me more in my greatest Sufferings, nor seems more fit for me, while I wait for Death, than singing Psalms of Praise to God; nor is there any Exercise in which I had rather end my Life. Should I not then willingly go to the heavenly Choir, where God is praised with perfect Love, and Joy, and Harmony? Had I more of a praising Frame of Soul, I should long more for that Life of Praise. I never find myself more willing to be there, than when I most joyfully speak or sing

the Praiſes of God. Tho' the *Dead praiſe not God in the Grave, nor Duſt celebrate him*; yet living Souls in Heaven do it joyfully, while their fleſhly Cloathing turns to Duſt. ' Lord, tune my Soul to " thy Praiſes now, that ſweet Experience may " make me long to be, where I ſhall do it better! " Wherever there is any excellent Muſick, I ſee " Men naturally flock to it, and hear it with De- " light. Surely had I once heard the heavenly " Choir, I ſhould eccho to their holy Songs, and " think it the trueſt Bleſſedneſs to bear my Part. " My God, it is the inward Melody of thy Spirit, " and my own Conſcience, that muſt tune me for " the heavenly Melody! O ſpeak thy Love firſt " to my Heart, and then I ſhall joyfully ſpeak it to " others, and ſhall ardently ſeek after a Communi- " on, better than that of ſinful Mortals! Tho' my " Sins make a ſad Diſcord in my preſent Songs, I " hope my Sighs and Tears for Sin have had the " Honour of thine Acceptance, who deſpiſeſt not a " contrite Soul. But if thy Spirit will ſing and " ſpeak within me, and help me againſt the jar- " ring Murmurs of my unbelieving Heart, and " pained Fleſh, I ſhall then offer thee what is more " ſuitable to thy Love and Grace. I confeſs, Lord, " that daily Tears and Sighs are not unſuitable to " the Eyes and Voice of ſo great a Sinner, now " under thy correcting Rod. But *he that offereth* " *Praiſe glorifies thee*; and is not this the *ſpiritual* " *Sacrifice, acceptable thro' Chriſt*, for which we " were made *Prieſts to God?* I refuſe not, Lord, to " lie in Tears and Groans when thou requireſt it, " nor do thou reject thoſe Tears and Groans; but " O give me better, that I may have better of " thine

"thine own to offer thee, and so prepare me for "the *far better* which I shall find with Christ!"

§ 18.——*Probably God makes glorified Spirits the Agents of his Beneficence to inferior Creatures.* Where he bestows on any the noblest Endowments, we see he makes most Use of such for the Benefit of others. Christ tells us, we shall *be like*, or equal, *to the Angels*, who are evidently the Ministers of God for the good of his People in this World. The *Apostle* says, *the Saints shall judge the World and Angels*; intimating that Devils and damned Spirits shall be subjected to the Saints. But if there were no more for us to do in Heaven but, with perfect Knowledge, Love and Joy, to hold Communion with God, and all the heavenly Society, it is enough to excite in a considerate Soul the most fervent Desires to be at Home with God.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

The Author breathes after Willingness to depart, and to be with Christ.

§ 1. *Lamenting the Inefficacy of his Convictions, he begs divine Teaching*; § 2, 3. *argues against his Doubts and Fears*; § 4. *desires a heavenly Temper*; *then*, § 5, 6. (1) *excites his Faith*, § 7. *viewing its Support from Reason, and* § 8. *from Experience, and* § 9. *pleading the Promises*: § 10. (2) *He next excites his Hope*, § 11. *views its Preparations, and* § 12. *pleads it in Prayer*: § 13. (3) *He also excites his Love*, § 14. *considers its Excellencies*, § 15. *prays for its Increase*, § 16. *contemplates the Perfection of heavenly Love*, § 17. *is jealous of his own Love*. § 18, 19. *enumerates the Evidences of God's Love, and* § 20. *prays for its fuller Discovery*.

§ 1. I Am convinced, that *it is far better to depart, and to be with Christ*, than to be here. But this Conviction alone will not excite such Desires in my Soul. They are opposed by a *natural Aversion to Death*, which Sin has greatly increased; by the *Remains of Unbelief*, which avails itself of our Darkness in the Flesh, and our too great Familiarity with this visible World; and also by our *Want of more lively Foretastes of Heaven*. What must be done to overcome this Opposition? Is there no Remedy?

medy? Yes, there is a Divine *Teaching*, by which we must learn *so to number our Days, that we may apply our Hearts unto Wisdom.* When we have read and heard, spoke and written the soundest Truth, and strongest Arguments, we still know, as if we knew not; and believe, as if we believed not; unless God powerfully impresses the same Things on our Minds, and awakens our Souls to feel what we know. Since we fell from God, the Communion between our Senses and Understanding, and also between our Understanding and our Will and Affections, is violated, and we are divided in ourselves by this Schism in our Faculties. All Men may easily know that there is an Almighty, Omniscient, Omnipresent, Eternal, and perfectly holy and good God, the Maker, Preserver, and Governour of all, who deserves our whole Trust, Love, and Obedience; but how little of this Knowledge is to be perceived in Men's Hearts, or Lives? All Men know that the World is Vanity, that Man must die, that Riches cannot then profit, that Time is precious, and that we have but little Time to prepare for Eternity; but how little do Men seem to have of the real Knowledge of these plain Truths? Indeed, when God comes in with his powerful awakening Light and Love, then those Things appear as different, as if we were but beginning to know them. All my best Reasons for our Immortality, are but as the new-formed Body of *Adam*, before *God breathed into him the Breath of Life*; and He only can make them *living* Reasons. To the Father of Lights I must therefore still look up, and for his Light and Love I must still wait. I must learn, both as a Student, and a Beggar. "When I have thought, and thought a "Thousand Times, I must beg thy Blessing, Lord,

" upon my Thoughts. The Eye of my Under-
" ſtanding will be uſeleſs, or vexatious to me,
" without thy illuminating Beams. O ſhine the
" Soul of thy Servant into a clearer Knowledge of
" thyſelf and Kingdom, and love him into more
" divine and heavenly Love, and he will then
" willingly come to thee!"

§ 2. Why ſhould I, by the *Fears of Death*, ſtrive againſt the common Courſe of Nature, and againſt my only Hopes of Happineſs? Is it not *appointed unto all Men once to die?* Would I have God make ſinful Man immortal upon Earth? When we are ſinleſs, we ſhall be immortal. The Love of Life was given, to teach me to preſerve it with Care, and uſe it well, and not to torment myſelf with the continual Foreſight of Death. If it be the Miſery after Death, that is feared; O what have I now to do, but to receive the free reconciling Grace, which is offered me from Heaven, to ſave me from ſuch Miſery; and to devote myſelf totally to him, who has promiſed, *Him that cometh to me, I will in no wiſe caſt out?* Had I ſtudied my Duty, and remembered that I am *not my own*, and that *my Times are in God's Hands*, I had been quiet from theſe fruitleſs Fears. Had my Reſignation and Devotedneſs to God been more abſolute, my Truſt in him would have been more eaſy. " But, Lord,
" thou knoweſt, that I would fain be thine, and
" wholly thine, and that to thee I deſire to live;
" therefore let me quietly die to thee, and wholly
" truſt thee with my Soul."

§ 3. Why ſhould I have any *remaining Doubt of the future State of pious ſeparate Spirits?* My Saviour has *entered into the Holieſt*, and has aſſured me that *there are many Manſions in his Father's Houſe*, and

and that when we are *absent from the Body*, we shall be *present with the Lord.* Who can think that all holy Souls, that have gone hence from the Beginning of the World, have been deceived in their Faith and Hope? And that all those, whose *Hope* was *only in this Life*, have been in the Right? Shall I not abhor every Suggestion that contains such Absurdities? Wonderful, that Satan can keep up so much Unbelief in the World, while he must make Men Fools, in order to make them Unbelievers and Ungodly!

§ 4. That my Soul has *no more lively Foretastes of Heaven*, arises from those many wilful Sins, by which I have *quenched the Spirit*, and from the Soul's Imprisonment in Flesh. This, O this, is the Misery and Burthen of my Soul! Tho' I can say I love God's Truth and Graces, his Work and Servants; yet that I have no more ardent and delightful Love of Heaven, where his Loveliness will be more fully opened to my Soul, is my Sin, Calamity, and Shame. If I did not see that it is so with other of the Servants of Christ, as well as myself, I should doubt whether Affections so disproportionate to my Profession did not imply an unsound Faith. It is strange that one, who expects quickly to see the glorious World, and enter the holy celestial Society, should not be more joyfully affected with such Hopes! And that I should think so much of the Pain and Perishing of the Flesh, tho' it be the common Way to such an End! O hateful Sin, that has so darkened and corrupted Souls, as to indispose them for their only expected Happiness! What did Man, when he forsook the Love and Obedience of his God! How just, that this Flesh should be our Prison, which we are for making our Home? How

mournful, that there is no more Grace and Holiness, Knowledge of God, and Communion with him in this World! That so few are Saints, and those few so very imperfect! That while the Sun shines on all the Earth, the Sun of Righteousness shines on so small a Part of it! He that made us capable of holy and heavenly Affections, gave us not that Capacity in vain. Yet, alas, how little of God and Glory enters into the Hearts of Men! When recovering Light shines upon us, how unthankfully do we entertain it! We cannot have the Conduct and Comfort of it, while we shut our Eyes, and turn away. And tho' God give to the best not so much of it as they desire, it is an unspeakable Mercy, that in this darksome World we may but hear of a better World, and may seek it in Hope. We must not grudge in our Prison to be denyed such a Presence of our King, and such Pleasures of the Kingdom, as innocent and free Subjects have. Hope of Pardon, and of a speedy Deliverance, are great Mercies to Malefactors. And if my Want of the Knowledge and Love of God, and of joyful Communion with the heavenly Society, be my Prison, and as the Suburbs of Hell, should it not make me long for *the Day of my Redemption, and the glorious Liberty of the Sons of God?* My sincere Desires of Deliverance, and of Holiness and Perfection, are my Evidences that I shall obtain them. As the Will is the Sinner, so the obstinate Continuance of a Will to Sin, is the Cause of continued Sin. So far as God makes us willing to be delivered from Sin, so far we are delivered, and our imperfect Deliverance is the Way to more. If Pains make me groan for Ease, and Sickness for Health,

why

why ſhould not my Remains of Ignorance, Unbelief, and Alienation from God, excite my Deſires after the Day of my Salvation? As it is the Nature of my Sin to draw down my Heart from God and Glory; ſo it is the Nature of my Faith, Hope, and Love, to raiſe my Heart towards heavenly Perfection; not to deſire Death, but that which is beyond it. And have I been ſo many Years in the School of Chriſt learning both how to live and die, praying for this Grace, and exerciſing it againſt this ſinful Fleſh, and after all, ſhall I now find Fleſh more powerful to draw me downward, than Faith, Hope, and Love to carry my Deſires up to God? ——"O God for-
" bid! O thou, that freely gaveſt me thy Grace,
" maintain it to the laſt againſt its Enemies, and
" make it finally victorious! It came from thee; it
" has been preſerved by thee; it is on thy Side, and
" wholly for thee; without it, I had lived as a Beaſt,
" and ſhould die more miſerably than a Beaſt; it is
" thine Image, which thou loveſt; it is a divine Na-
" ture, and a heavenly Beam. What will a Soul be
" without it, but a Dungeon of Darkneſs, and dead
" to Holineſs and Heaven? Without it, who ſhall
" plead thy Cauſe againſt the Devil, World, and
" Fleſh? Without thy Glory, Earth is but Earth;
" and without thy Grace, Earth would be a Hell.
" O, rather deny me the Light of the Sun, than
" the Light of thy Countenance! Leſs miſerable
" had I been without Life or Being, than without
" thy Grace. Without Thine, and my Saviour's
" Help, *I can do Nothing*. I could not pray, or
" learn, without thee; I never could conquer a
" Temptation without thee; and can I die, nor be
" prepared to die, without thee? I ſhall but ſay as

" *Thomas* of Christ, *I know not whither* my Soul *is* " *going, and how can I know the Way? My Lord,* " *having loved his own which were in the World, he* " *loved them unto the End.* He even commended " and rewarded those, that *had continued with him* " *in his Temptations.* Thou loveſt Fidelity and " Perſeverance in thy Servants; and wilt thou for- " ſake a Sinner in his Extremity, who conſents to " thy Covenant, and would not forſake thee? My " God, I have often ſinned againſt thee, but thou " knoweſt I would fain be thine. I can ſay with " *Paul*, thou art the *God, whoſe I am, and whom I* " *ſerve*; and O that I could ſerve thee better! To " ſerve thee, is but to receive thy Grace, and uſe it " for my own and others Good, and thereby pleaſe " and glorifie thee. I have Nothing to do in this " World, but to ſeek and ſerve thee. I have No- " thing to do with my Tongue, but to ſpeak to " thee, and for thee, and with my Pen but to pub- " liſh thy Glory and thy Will. What have I to " do with all my Reputation, and Influence over " others, but to increaſe thy Church, and propagate " thy holy Truth and Service? What have I to " do with my remaining Time, even theſe laſt and " languiſhing Hours, but to look up unto thee, and " wait for thy Grace, and thy Salvation? O par- " don all my carnal Thoughts, all my unthankful " Treatment of thy Grace and Love, and all my " wilful Sins againſt thy Truth and Thee! Under " the Terrors of the Law thou didſt even proclaim " thyſelf, *The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and* " *gracious, long-ſuffering, and abundant in Goodneſs,* " *and Truth; keeping Mercy for Thouſands, forgiving* " *Iniquity, and Tranſgreſſion, and Sin.* And is not

" *the*

" *the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ* revealed in the
" Gospel for our more abundant Faith and Con-
" solation? My God, I know, I can never be suf-
" ficiently confident of thy all-sufficient Power,
" Wisdom, and Goodness. When I have said,
" *Will the Lord cast off for ever? and will he be fa-*
" *vourable no more? Is his Mercy clean gone for ever?*
" *Doth his Promise fail for evermore? Hath God*
" *forgotten to be gracious? Hath he in Anger shut up*
" *his tender Mercies?* Conscience has replied, *This*
" *is my Infirmity.* I never wanted Comfort for
" Want of Mercy in Thee; but for want of Faith
" and Holiness in myself. And hast Thou not
" Mercy also to give me that Faith and Holiness.
" My God, *All is of Thee, and thro' Thee, and to*
" *Thee*, and when I have the Felicity, the Glory
" of all for ever will be thine. None that trust in
" thy Nature and Promise shall be ashamed. If I
" can live and die trusting in Thee, surely I shall
" not be confounded."

§ 5. Why then should it seem a difficult Question, *how my Soul may willingly leave this World, and go to Christ in Peace?* The same Grace which regenerated me, must bring me to my desired End.——
' *Believe* and *Trust* thy Father, thy Saviour, and
' thy Comforter.——*Hope* for the joyful Entertain-
' ments of the promised Blessedness.——And long
' by *Love* for nearer divine Union and Commu-
' nion. Thus, O my Soul, mayst thou depart in
' Peace.'

§ 6. (1) *Believe and trust the Promise of God.* How sure is it, and how suitable to his Love, to the Nature of our Souls, and to the Operations of every Grace? ' Why, O my Soul, art thou so vain-

'ly solicitous to have clear distinct Conceptions of 'the celestial World? When thou art possest of a 'better State, thou shalt know it as a Possessor 'ought to do; for such a Knowledge as thou 'lookest after, is Part of the Possession. Thy Sa-'viour, and his glorified Saints, are Possessors. His 'Knowledge must now be thy chief Satisfaction. 'Seek not vainly to usurp his Prerogative. Wouldst 'thou be a God and Saviour to thyself? Consider 'how much of the *Fall* there is in this selfish De-'sire to *be as God*, in knowing that which belongs 'not to thee to know. Thou knowest that there 'undoubtedly *is a God* of infinite Perfection, *and* '*that he is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek* '*him.* Labour more to know thy Duty to this 'God, and absolutely *trust him* as to the Particulars 'of thy Reward. Thou didst trust thy Parents to 'provide thee Food and Raiment, and didst im-'plicitly obey them. Thou hast trusted Physicians 'to give thee Medicines, without enquiring after 'every Ingredient. If a Pilot undertake to carry 'thee to the *Indies*, thou canst trust his Conduct, 'without knowing either the Ship, or how to go-'vern it, or the Way, or the Place to which thou art 'conveyed. And must not thy God and Saviour be 'trusted to bring thee safe to Heaven, unless he 'will satisfie all thy Enquiries? The Command to *be* '*careful for Nothing*, and to *cast all thy Care on God*, '*who careth for thee*, obligeth thee in all Things 'that are God's Part. To dispose of a departing 'Soul is God's Part. O how much Evil is there in 'this distrusting, self-providing Care? Be not *cast* '*down*, O departing Soul, nor by Unbelief *disqui-*'*eted within me.* Trust *thou in God*, for soon shall

'Expe-

'Experience teach thee to *praise him, who is the* '*Health of my Countenance, and my God.*'

§ 7. How clearly does *Reason* command me to trust him, absolutely and implicitly to trust him, and to distrust myself? He is essential, infinite Perfection, Wisdom, Power, and Love. There is Nothing to be trusted in any Creature, but God working in it, or by it. I am altogether his own, by Right, by Devotion, and by Consent. He is the Giver of all Good to every Creature, as freely as the Sun gives its Light, and shall we not trust the Sun to shine? He is my Father, and has took me into his Family, and shall I not trust my heavenly Father? He has given me his Son, as the greatest Pledge of his Love, and *shall he not with him also freely give me all Things?* His Son purposely came to reveal his Father's unspeakable Love, and shall I not trust him who has proclaimed his Love by such a Messenger from Heaven? He has given me the Spirit of his Son, even the Spirit of Adoption, the Witness, Pledge, and Earnest of Heaven, the Seal of God upon me, *Holiness to the Lord*, and shall I not believe his Love, and trust him? He has made me a Member of his Son, and will he not take Care of me, and is not Christ to be trusted with his Members? I am his Interest, and the Interest of his Son, freely beloved, and dearly bought, and may I not trust him with his Treasure? He has made me the Care of *Angels*, who *rejoiced at my Repentance*, and shall they lose their Joy, or Ministration? He is in Covenant with me, and has *given me many great and precious Promises*, and can he be *unfaithful?* My Saviour is the *Forerunner*, who has *entered into the Holiest*, and is there interceding for

me, having first conquered Death to assure us of a future Life, and ascended into Heaven, to shew us whither we must ascend, and having *said to his Brethren, I ascend to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God*; and shall I not follow him thro' Death, and trust such a Guide and Captain of my Salvation? He is there to *prepare a Place for me, and will receive me unto himself*, and may I not confidently expect it? He told a Malefactor on the Cross, *to Day shalt thou be with me in Paradise*, to shew believing Sinners what they may expect. His *Apostles* and other Saints have served him on Earth with all these Expectations. *The Spirits of just Men made perfect* are now possessing what I hope for, and I am a *Follower of them, who thro' Faith and Patience inherit the promised* Felicity; and may I not trust him to save me, who has already saved Millions? I must be at a divine Disposal, whether I will or not and however I vex my Soul with Fears, and Cares, and Sorrows, I shall never prevail against the Will of God, which is the only Rest for Souls. Our own Wills have undone us, and are our Disease, our Prison, and our Death, till they are brought over to the Will of God; and shall I die, distrustfully striving against his Will, and preferring my own before it?

§ 8. What abundant *Experience* have I had of God's Fidelity and Love, and after all shall I not trust him? His undeserved Mercy gave me Being, chose my Parents, gave them affectionate Desires for my real Good, taught them to instruct me early in his Word, and educate me in his Fear, made my Habitation and Companions suitable, endowed me with a teachable Disposition, put excellent Books

Books into my Hands, and placed me under wise and faithful Schoolmasters and Ministers. His Mercy fixed me in the best of Lands, and in the best Age that Land had seen. His Mercy early destroyed in me all great Expectations from the World, taught me to bear the Yoke from my Youth, caused me rather to groan under my Infirmities, than struggle with powerful Lusts, and chastened me betimes, but did not give me over unto Death. Ever since I was at the Age of *Nineteen*, great Mercy has trained me up in the School of Affliction, to keep my sluggish Soul awake in the constant Expectations of my Change, to kill my proud and worldly Thoughts, and to direct all my Studies to Things the most necessary. How has a Life of constant but gentle Chastisement, urged me to *make my Calling and Election sure*, and to prepare my Accounts, as one that must quickly give them up to God? The Face of Death, and Nearness of Eternity convinced me what Books to read, what Studies to prosecute, what Companions to choose, drove me early into the Vineyard of the Lord, and taught me to *preach as a dying Man to dying Men*. It was divine Love and Mercy which made sacred Truth so pleasant to me, that my Life, under all my Infirmities, has been almost a constant Recreation. How far beyond my Expectation has a merciful God encouraged me in his sacred Work, choosing every Place of my Ministry and Abode to this Day without my own seeking, and never sending me to labour in vain? How many are gone to Heaven, and how many are in the Way, thro' a divine Blessing on the Word which in Weakness I delivered? Many good *Christians* are glad of now and then an

to meditate on God's Word, and refresh themselves in his holy Worship, but God has allowed and called me to make it the constant Business of my Life. In my Library, I have profitably and pleasantly dwelt among the shining Lights, with which the Learned, Wise, and holy Men of all Ages have illuminated the World. How many comfortable Hours have I had in the Society of living Saints, and in the Love of faithful Friends? How many joyful Days in solemn worshipping Assemblies, where the Spirit of Christ has been manifestly present, both with Ministers and People? How unworthy was such a sinful Worm as I, who never had any *Academical Helps*, nor much from the Mouth of any Teacher, that Books should become so great a Blessing to me, and that God should induce or constrain me, quite beyond my own Intentions, to provide any such like Helps for others? How unworthy that God should use me above *Forty Years*, in so comfortable a Work, as pleading and writing for Love, Peace, and Concord, and with so much Success? What Mercy had I, amidst the Calamities of a civil War, to live *two Years* in Safety at *Coventry*, a City of Defence, and in the Heart of the Kingdom? When I afterwards saw the Effects of human Folly and Fury, and of God's Displeasure, in the Ruin of Towns and Countries, and in Fields covered with Carcasses of the Slain, how mercifully was I preserved, and brought Home in Peace? And O! how great was the Mercy shewed me in a peaceable, humble, unanimous People, so numerous, so exemplary, and who to this Day maintain their Integrity and Concord, when for *Thirty one Years* I have been forced to remain at a Distance from them? What a Mer-

cy,

ey, when I might not speak by Voice to any single Congregation, to be enabled to speak by Writings to many, and to have the plainest Writings attended with Success, and some of them sent to preach in foreign Lands and Languages! Tho' I have been sent to the common Jail, for my Service and Obedience to my God, yet he has there kept me in Peace, and soon delivered me; and how often has he succoured me, when Nature and Art have failed? How has he cured my consumptive Coughs, stopped my flowing Blood, eased my pained Limbs, and upheld an emaciated Skeleton? I have had *Fifty Years* added to my Days, tho' I expected not to live one of them; and what strange Deliverances have been wrought for me, upon the importunate Requests of many Hundreds of my praying Friends? How have I been kept in ordinary Health and Safety, when the raging *Pestilence* came near my Habitation, and consumed an *Hundred Thousand Citizens?* And how was my Dwelling preserved, when I saw [*London*] the Glory of the Land in Flames?——These, and many more, are my *Experiences* of that wonderful Mercy which has measured my Pilgrimage, and filled up my Days. Never did God break his Promise with me. Never did he fail me, or forsake me. And shall I now distrust him at last?

§ 9. " To Thee, O Lord, *as to a faithful* " *Creator, I commit my Soul.* I know that thou art " *the faithful God, which keepeth Covenant and Mer-* " *cy with them that love thee, and keep thy Command-* " *ments.* Thou *art faithful, who hast called me to* " *the Fellowship of thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord.* " Thy Faithfulness has saved me from Temptati-

" on

" on, and kept me from prevailing Evil, and will
" *preserve my whole Spirit, and Soul and Body unto*
" *the Coming of Christ.* It is *in Faithfulness thou*
" *hast afflicted me*; and shall I not trust thee to
" save me! *It is* thy *faithful Saying, that* thy *Elect*
" *shall obtain the Salvation which is in Christ Jesus,*
" *with eternal Glory; for if we be dead with him, we*
" *shall also live with him; if we suffer, we shall also*
" *reign with him.* —— To thee, O my Saviour, I
" commit my Soul; it is thine by Redemption,
" thine by Covenant; it is sealed by thy Spirit,
" and thou hast promised not to lose it. Thou wast
" *made like unto thy Brethren, that thou mightest be*
" *a merciful and faithful High Priest in Things per-*
" *taining to God, to make Reconciliation for our Sins.*
" *By thy Blood* we have *Boldness to enter into the Ho-*
" *liest, by a new and living Way consecrated for us.*
" Cause me to *draw near with a true Heart, in full*
" *Assurance of Faith.* Thy Name is *faithful and*
" *true. True and faithful* are all thy Promises.
" Thou hast promised *Rest to weary Souls that come*
" *to thee.* I am weary of Suffering, Sin, and Flesh;
" weary of my Darkness, Dullness, and Distance.
" Whither should I look for Rest, but Home to
" my heavenly Father and Thee? I am but a
" *bruised Reed,* but thou *wilt not break* me. I am but
" *smoaking Flax,* but thou *wilt not quench* what thy
" Grace hath kindled. Thou, in whose Name the
" Nations trust, *wilt bring forth Judgment unto*
" *Victory.* —— *The Lord redeemeth the Souls of his*
" *Servants, and none of them that trust in him shall be*
" *desolate. I will wait on thy Name, for it is Good;*
" *I trust in the Mercy of God for ever and ever. The*
" *Lord is good, a strong hold in the Day of Trouble,*

" *and*

" *and he knoweth them that trust in him.* Sinful " *Fear brings a Snare, but whoso putteth his Trust in* " *the Lord, shall be safe. Blessed is the Man that* " *maketh the Lord his Trust. Thou art my Hope, O* " *Lord God, thou art my Trust from my Youth. By* " *thee have I been holden up from the Womb, my Praise* " *shall be continually of thee. Cast me not off in the* " *Time of Old-Age, forsake me not when my Strength* " *faileth. O God! thou hast taught me from my* " *Youth, and hitherto have I declared thy wondrous* " *Work. Now also, when I am old and grey headed,* " *O God! forsake me not. Mine Eyes are unto thee,* " *O God the Lord! in thee is my Trust, leave not my* " *Soul destitute. I had fainted, unless I had believed* " *to see the Goodness of the Lord in the Land of the* " *Living*, even where they that live shall die no " more."——The Sun may cease to shine on Man, and the Earth to bear us; but God will never cease to be faithful to his Promises. Blessed be the Lord, who has commanded me so safe and quieting a Duty, as to trust in him, and cast all my Cares upon him, who has promised to care for me!

§ 10. (2) *Hope also for the Salvation of God.* Hope is the Ease, yea the Life of our Hearts, which would otherwise break, and even die within us. Despair is no small Part of Hell. God cherishes Hope, as he is the Lover of Souls. Satan our Enemy, cherishes Despair, when his more usual Way of Presumption fails. Hope anticipates Salvation, as Fear does Evil. It is the Hypocrite's Hope that perishes; and all who hope for durable Happiness on Earth, must be deceived. But *happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his Help, whose Hope is in the Lord his God, which made Heaven and Earth,*

which

which keepeth Truth for ever. Wo to me, *if in this Life only I had Hope. But the Righteous hath Hope in his Death. And Hope maketh not ashamed. Blessed is the Man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose Hope the Lord is.* ' *Lay hold* then, O my Soul, ' *upon the Hope set before thee*; it is thy *sure and* ' *stedfast Anchor*, without which thou wilt be as ' a Shipwreckt Vessel. Thy Foundation is sure, ' even God himself.' *Our Faith and Hope are* both *in God. Christ, who dwells in our Hearts by Faith, is in us the Hope of Glory. By this Hope, better than the Law of* Moses *could bring, we draw nigh unto God. We hope for that we see not*, and *with Patience wait for it. We are saved by Hope.* It is an encouraging Grace, it excites our *Diligence*, and helps *to full Assurance unto the End.* It is a desiring Grace, and is earnest to obtain the Glory hoped for. It is a comforting Grace, for *the God of Hope fills us with all Joy and Peace in believing, that we may abound in Hope thro' the Power of the Holy Ghost.* ' Shake ' off Despondency, O my Soul, *and rejoice in Hope* ' *of the Glory of God. Believe in Hope*, tho' dying ' Flesh would tell thee that it is *against Hope.*'

§ 11. What blessed Preparations are made for our Hope? *God has confirmed it by two immutable Things*, his Promise and his Oath. *His abundant Mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively Hope, by the Resurrection of Christ, to an Inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in Heaven for us. Grace teacheth us, that denying Ungodliness and worldly Lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present World; looking for that blessed Hope, and the glorious Appearing of the Great God, and our Saviour.* We are *renewed of*

the

the Holy Ghost, and *justified by Grace, that we should be made Heirs according to the Hope of eternal Life. The Eyes of our Understanding are enlightened, that we may know what is the Hope of his Calling, and what the Riches of the Glory of his Inheritance in the Saints. The Hope which is laid up for us in Heaven, hath, thro' the Gospel, brought Life and Immortality to Light. Having Hope towards God,* we *exercise ourselves to have always a Conscience void of Offence, and serve God Day and Night. For an Helmet, we put on the Hope of Salvation.* Death is not to us, *as to others which have no Hope. Our Lord Jesus Christ, and God even our Father, hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting Consolation, and good Hope thro' Grace,* to *comfort our Hearts, and stablish us in every good Word and Work. We must hold fast the Rejoicing of the Hope firm unto the End,* and *continue in the Faith, grounded and settled, and not be moved away from the Hope of the Gospel.* "*And now,* "*Lord, what wait I for? my Hope is in thee. Up-* "*hold me according to thy Word, that I may live, and* "*let me not be ashamed of my Hope. Tho' our Ini-* "*quities testifie against us,* yet, *O Lord the Hope of* "*Israel, the Saviour thereof in Time of Trouble, be* "not *as a Stranger, leave us not. We* have been "*shewed the Praises of the Lord, and his wonderful* "*Works, that we might set our Hope in God. Re-* "*member the Word unto thy Servant, upon which* "*thou hast caused me to hope. If thou, Lord, shouldest* "*mark Iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? But* "*there is Forgiveness with thee, that thou mayst be* "*feared.*" *I wait for the Lord, my Soul doth wait, and in his Word do I hope. Let Israel hope in the Lord, for with the Lord there is Mercy, and with him*

him is plenteous Redemption. The Lord taketh Pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his Mercy. Tho' *my Flesh and my Heart faileth, God is the Strength of my Heart. The Lord is my Portion, saith my Soul, therefore will I hope in him. The Lord is good unto them that wait for him, to the Soul that seeketh him. It is good that a Man should both hope, and quietly wait for the Salvation of the Lord. It is good for a Man that he bear the Yoke in his Youth, and that he keepeth Silence,* and *putteth his Mouth in the Dust, if so be there may be Hope.*

§ 12. God needs not flatter such Worms as we are, nor promise us what he never means to perform. He has laid the Rudiments of our Hope in a Nature capable of desiring, seeking, and thinking of another Life. He has called me by Grace to actual Desires and Endeavours, and has vouchsafed some Foretastes. I look for no Heaven, but the Perfection of divine Life, Light, and Love in endless Glory, with Christ and his Saints; and this he has already begun in me. And shall I not boldly hope, when I have Capacity, the Promise, and the Earnest and Foretaste? Is it not God himself that has caused me to hope? Was not Nature, Promise and Grace from him? And can a Soul miscarry and be deceived, that departs hence in a Hope of God's own producing and encouraging? "Lord, I have lived in Hope, I have "prayed, laboured, suffered, and waited in Hope, "and by thy Grace I will die in Hope; and is not "this according to thy Word and Will? And wilt "thou cast away a Soul that hopes in thee, by "thine own Command and Operation?" Had Wealth, and Honour, and Continuance on Earth, or the Favour of Man, been my Reward and Hope,

Hope, my Hope and I had died together. Were this our best, how vain were Man? But the Lord liveth, and my Redeemer is glorified, and intercedes for me; and the same Spirit is in Heaven, who is in my Heart, as the same Sun is in the Firmament and in my House. The Promise is sure to all Christ's Seed; for Millions are now in Heaven, who once lived and died in Hope; they were Sinners once, as I now am; they had no other Saviour, Sanctifier, or Promise than I now have. *Confessing that they were Strangers and Pilgrims on the Earth, they desired a better Country, that is, a heavenly*, where they now are. And shall I not follow them in Hope, who have sped so well? 'Then, O 'my Soul, *hope unto the End. Hope in the Lord, 'from henceforth and for ever.' I will hope continually, and will yet praise him more and more. My Mouth shall shew forth his Righteousness and Salvation. The Lord is at my right Hand, I shall not be moved. Therefore my Heart is glad, and my Glory rejoiceth, my Flesh also shall rest in Hope.* God hath *shewed me the Path of Life; in his Presence is Fulness of Joy, at his right Hand there are Pleasures for evermore.*

§ 13. (3) What then remains, but that in Faith and Hope *I love my God, my Saviour, my Comforter, the glorious Society, and my own Perfection in Glory, better than this Burthen of Flesh, and this howling Wilderness?* How odious is that Darkness and Unbelief, that Unholiness and Disaffection, that Deadness and Stupidity, which makes such Love seem hard or unsuitable? Is it unsuitable or hard for the Eye to see the Light, or the Beauties of Creation, or for a Man to love his Life, or Health, his Father,

ther, or his Friend? What ſhould be eaſier to a Nature that has rational Love, than to love him, who is Love itſelf? He that loveth all, and gives to all a Capacity to love, ſhould be loved by all; and he that hath eſpecially loved me, ſhould eſpecially be loved by me.

§ 14. *Love* deſires to pleaſe God, and therefore to be in the moſt pleaſing State, and freed from all that is diſpleaſing to him; which is not to be hoped for on Earth. It deſires all ſuitable Nearneſs, Acquaintance, Union, and Communion. It is weary of Diſtance, and Alienation. It takes Advantage of every Notice of God, to renew and exerciſe theſe Deſires. Every Meſſage and Mercy from God is Fuel for Love, and while we are ſhort of Perfection, ſtirs up our Deſires after more of God. The Soul is, where it loves. If our Friends dwell in our Hearts by Love; and if fleſhly Pleaſure, Riches, and Honour dwell in the Hearts of the Voluptuous, Covetous, and Proud; ſurely God, and Chriſt, Heaven, and Holineſs dwell in the Heart which loves them fervently. And if Heaven dwell in my Heart, ſhall I not deſire to dwell in Heaven? Would divine Love more plentifully pour itſelf upon my Heart, how eaſy would it be to leave this Fleſh and World? Death and the Grave would be but a Triumph for victorious Love. It would be eaſier to die in Peace and Joy, than go to Reſt at Night after a fatiguing Day, or eat when I am hungry. A little Love has made me willingly ſtudy, preach, write, and even ſuffer; and would not more Love make me willingly go to God? Shall the Imagination of Houſe, Gardens, Walks, Libraries, Proſpects, &c. allure the Deſires of deceived

ceived Minds, and ſhall not the Thoughts of heavenly Manſions, Converſe, and Joys, more powerfully draw up my Deſires? Can I love ſuch a World as this, where Tyranny ſheds Streams of Blood, and lays Cities and Countries deſolate; where the Wicked are exalted, the Juſt and Innocent reproached and oppreſſed, the Goſpel reſtrained, Idolatry and Infidelity too generally kept up, where Satan too often chooſes Paſtors for the Churches of Chriſt, even ſuch as by Ignorance, Pride, and Senſuality become devouring Wolves to thoſe whom they ſhould feed and comfort; where no two Perſons are in all Things of a Mind; and where there appears but little Hopes of a Remedy? And ſhall I not think more delightfully of *the Inheritance of the Saints in Light*, and of the cordial Love and joyful Praiſes of the Church triumphant? Should I not love a lovely and loving World, much better than a World where there is comparatively ſo little Loveliness or Love? All that is of God is good and lovely. But here his Glory ſhines not in felicitating Splendor. I am taught to look upward when I pray *Our Father, which art in Heaven.* God's Works are amiable even in Hell; and yet tho' I would know them, I would not be there. And, alas! how much of the Works of Man are here mixed with the Works of God? Here is God's Wiſdom, but Man's Folly; God's Government, but Man's Tyranny; God's Love and Mercy, but Man's Wrath and Cruelty; much of God's beautiful Order and Harmony, but much of Man's Deformity and Confuſion. Here is much Truth and Juſtice, but how is it mixed? Here are wiſe judicious Teachers and Companions, but comparatively how few?

few? Here are worthy and religious Families; but by the Temptations of Wealth, and worldly Interest, how full even of *the Sins of Sodom, Pride, Fulness of Bread, and Abundance of Idleness*, if not also of Unmercifulness to the Poor? And how few pious Families of the Great, that do not quickly degenerate from their Progenitors by Error or Sensuality? Here are some that educate their Children wisely in the Fear of God; and accordingly have Comfort in them; but how many are there, that, having devoted them to God in Baptism, train them up in the Service of the World, the Flesh, and the Devil? How many Parents think, that when they offer their Children to God in Baptism, without any due Consideration of the Nature of that great Covenant with God, that God must accept and certainly regenerate and save them? And I doubt too many religious Parents forget, that they themselves are Sponsors in that Covenant, and that they undertake to use the Means on their Part, to make their Children fit for the Grace of the Son and the Communion of the Spirit; but think God should sanctifie and preserve them because they are their's, and are baptized, tho' they keep them not from great and unnecessary Temptations, nor plainly and seriously teach them the Meaning of the Covenant which was made with God for them? How many send them to get Sciences, Trades, or to travel in foreign Lands, before ever they were instructed at Home, against those Temptations which they must encounter, and by which they are so often undone? How commonly, when they have first neglected this great Duty to their Children, do they plead a Necessity of thrusting them out, from some Punctilio

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of Honour, or Conformity to the World, or to adorn them with ſome of the Plumes of faſhionable Modes and Ceremonies, which will never compenſate the Loſs of heavenly Wiſdom, Mortification, and the Love of God and Man? As if they might ſend them to Sea, for ſome trifling Reaſon, without Pilot or Anchor, and think that God muſt ſave them from the Waves? And when ſuch Children have forſook God, and given themſelves up to Senſuality and Prophaneſs, theſe Parents wonder at the Judgements of God, and with broken Hearts lament their own Infelicity, inſtead of lamenting their own Miſconduct. Thus Families, Churches, and Kingdoms run on to Blindneſs, Ungodlineſs, and Confuſion. Folly, Sin, and Miſery, miſtaking themſelves for Wit, Honour, and Proſperity, are the ordinary Purſuits of Mortals. Such a Bedlam is moſt of the World become, that he is the braveſt Man who can ſin and be damned with Reputation and Renown, and ſucceſsfully draw the greateſt Number with him to Hell. This is the World which ſtands in Competition for my Love with the ſpiritual bleſſed World.

§ 15. In this World I have had many of God's Mercies and Comforts; but their Sweetneſs was their Taſte of divine Love, and their Tendency to heavenly Perfection. What was the End and Uſe of all the Good that ever I ſaw, or that God ever did for my Soul or Body, but to teach me to love him, and to deſire to love him more? Wherever I go, and which Way ever I look, I ſee *Vanity and Vexation* written upon all Things in this World, ſo far as they ſtand in Competition with God: And I ſee *Holineſs to the Lord*, written upon every Thing,

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so far as it leads me to him as my ultimate End. The *Emptiness*, *Danger*, and *Bitterness*, of the World, and the *All-sufficiency*, *Faithfulness*, and *Goodness* of God, have been the Sum of all the Experiences of my Life. And shall a worldly backward Heart overcome the Teachings of Nature, Scripture, the Spirit of Grace, and all Experience? "O my God, Love is thy great and special Gift. All Good is from thee. Come down "into this Heart, for it cannot come up to thee! "Can the Plants go up to the Sun for Life, or the "Eye for Light? Dwell in me by the Spirit of "Love, and I shall dwell by Love in thee. I easily feel, that thro' thy Grace I love thy Word, "thy Image, thy Work, and O! how heartily do "I love to love thee, and long to know and love "thee more? And if *all Things be of Thee, and thro' "Thee, and to Thee*, surely this Love is eminently "so. It means Thee, Lord: It looks to Thee: "It serves Thee; For Thee it moves, and seeks, "and sighs: In Thee it trusts; And the Hope, and "Peace, and Comfort which support me, are in "Thee. When I was a returning Prodigal in "Rags, Thou sawest me afar off, and didst meet "me with the Caresses of thy Love; and shall I "doubt whether he that has better cloathed me, "and has dwelt within me, will entertain me in "the World of Love?"

§ 16. The Suitableness of Things below to my fleshly Nature has detained my Affections too much on Earth; and shall not the Suitableness of Things above to my spiritual Nature much more draw up my Love to Heaven?—There is the God whom I have sought and served. He is also here; but veil-

ed,

ed, and little known. There he shines to heavenly Spirits in heavenly Glory.--There is the Saviour in *whom I have believed.* He also dwelt on Earth; but cloathed in such Meanness, and humbled to such a Life and Death, as was *to the Jews a Stumbling-Block, and to the Greeks Foolishness.* Now he shines and reigns in Glory, above the Malice and Contempt of Sinners. And *I shall live* there, *because he lives*; and *in his Light I shall see Light.*——I had here some Rays of heavenly Light, but under what Eclipses, and even long and Winter Nights? There I shall dwell in the City of God, the heavenly Jerusalem, where there is no Night nor Eclipse.——There are heavenly Hosts, in whose holy Love and joyful Praises I would fain partake. I have here, tho' unseen, had some of their loving Assistance. But there I shall be with them, of the same Nature, and the same triumphant Church.——There are perfected Souls; not *striving* like the Disciples, *who should be the greatest*; not like *Noah* in the old World; or *Lot* in *Sodom*; or *Abraham* among Idolaters; not like those that *wandered about in Sheep-Skins, and Goat-Skins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented,* hid *in Dens and Caves of the Earth*; not like *Job* on the Dunghill, or *Lazarus* at the rich Man's Gate; not as we poor bewildered Sinners, feeling Evil and fearing more. Should I fear a darksome Passage into a World of perfect Light? Should I fear to go to Love itself? O excellent Grace of Faith which foresees, and blessed Word of Faith which foreshews this World of Love! Shall I fear to enter where there is no Wrath, Reserve, Suspicion, or selfish Separation; but Love will make every holy Spirit as dear to me as myself, and me to them

as lovely as themselves, and God to us all more amiable than ourselves and all? "Lord, hadst thou "not given me a Will and Love, which is Part of "my Nature, I could not have tasted how desire-"able it is to live in a World of universal, perfect, "endless Love. But unless thou also *sheddest abroad* "*thy Love upon my Heart, by the Spirit* of Jesus, the "great Medium of Love, and turn my very Na-"ture and Inclination into divine and holy Love, "I shall not long for the World of Love. O give "me not only the Image of Godliness, but the *di-*"*vine Nature*, which is holy Love! And then my "Soul will hasten towards thee, and cry, How "long? O Lord, how long? O come, come "quickly, make no Delay!"

§ 17. Surely the Fear of dying intimates some contrary Love that inclines the Soul another Way, and some shameful Unbelief of the attractive Glory of the World of Love; otherwise no frozen Person longs more for the Fire, none in a Dungeon for Light, than we should for heavenly Light and Love. The Love of God to himself is the most amiable Object to Saints and Angels; and next to that, his Love to all his Works, to the World, and to the Church in Heaven, manifests more of his Loveliness than his Love to me. Yet due Self-Love in me is God's Work and Part of his natural Image; and when this is grown inordinate by Sin, I must enquire after God's Love to me; for I am not so capable of ascending above Self-Interest, and Self-Love, as I shall be in Glory. I am glad to perceive that others love God, and I love those most that I find most love him. But other Men's Love of God will not be accepted

instead

instead of Mine. Nor will God's Love to others satisfie me without his Love to me. But when God's Self-Love, his Love to his Creatures, especially the glorified, and also his Love to me a vile Sinner, are all before me; what should then stay my ascending Love, or discourage my Desires to be with God? 'And canst thou doubt, O my Soul, 'whether thou art going to a God that loveth thee? 'If the Jews discerned the great Love of Christ to '*Lazarus* by his Tears, canst not thou discern his 'Love to thee in his Blood? It is not the less, but 'the more obliging and amiable, that it was not 'shed for thee alone, but for many. May I not 'say, *I live by the Faith of the Son of God, who* '*loved me, and gave himself for me?* Yea, it is not 'so much, *I that live, but Christ liveth in me.* And 'will he forsake the Habitation which his Love has 'chosen, and which he has so dearly bought? '*What shall separate us from the Love of God?* If '*Life* has not, *Death* shall not do it. O my Soul, 'if leaning on Christ's Breast at Meat was a Token 'of his peculiar Love to *John*, is not his dwelling 'in thee by the Faith, and his living in thee by 'his Spirit, a sure Token of his Love to thee? 'Did his darkly saying, *if he tarry till I come, what* '*is that to thee*, raise a Report that the beloved 'Disciple should not die? why should not plain 'Promises assure thee, that thou shalt live for 'ever with him that loveth thee? Be not so un-'thankful, O my Soul, as to doubt whether thy 'heavenly Father, and thy Lord love thee. Canst 'thou forget the sealed Testimonies of it! Did I 'not lately repeat so many as ought to shame thy

'Doubts? A Multitude of thy Friends have so en-
'tirely loved thee, that thou canst not doubt of it;
'and did any of them testifie their Love with the
'convincing Evidence that God has done? Are
'they Love itself? Is their Love so full, so firm,
'and unchangeable as his?' I think Heaven the sweeter, because many of my old, lovely, affectionate, holy Friends are there, and am the more willing by Death to follow them. And should it not be more pleasing to think that my God and Father, my Saviour and Comforter are there? Was not *Lazarus* in the Bosom of God? And yet he is said to be in *Abraham's Bosom*; that is, not there alone, but as we are all to *sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the Kingdom of God.* I am often ready to entertain myself with naming such of my Friends as are now with Christ; but in Heaven they will love me better than they did on Earth, and my Love to them will be more pleasant. But all these Sparks are little to the Sun.

§ 18. Every Place I have lived in has its Monuments of divine Love. Every Year and Hour of of my Life has been a Time of Love. Every Friend, Neighbour, and even Enemy have been the Messengers and Instruments of Love. Every State and Change of my Life, notwithstanding my Sin, have opened to me the Treasures and Mysteries of Love. And shall I doubt whether the same God loves me? *Is he the God of the Hills and not of the Valleys?* Did he love me in my Youth and Health, and will he not also in my Age, and Pain, and Sickness? Did he love all the Saints better in this Life than at their Death? My Groans grieve my Friends,

Friends, but abate not their Love. God loved me when I was his Enemy, to make me a Friend. God will finish his own Work. O the Multitude of Mercies to my Soul and Body, in Peace and War, in Youth and Age, to myself and Friends! Have I lived in the Experience of the Love of God to me, and shall I die doubting of it? I am not much in Doubt of the Truth of my Love to him. I love his Word, Works, and Ways, and would fain be nearer to him, and love him more, and loath myself for loving him no better. *Peter* may more confidently say, *Thou knowest that I love thee*, than I know that thou loveſt me; becauſe our Knowledge of God's great Love, is leſs than his Knowledge of our little Love; and without the Knowledge of our Love to God, we can never be ſure of his ſpecial Love to us. I am not entirely a Stranger to myſelf. I know for what I have lived and laboured, and whom I have deſired to pleaſe. The *God whoſe I am, and whom I ſerve*, hath loved me in my Youth, and will love me in my aged Weakneſs. My Pains ſeem grievous; but Love chooſes them, uſes them for my good, moderates them, and will ſhortly end them. Why then ſhould I doubt of my Father's Love? Shall Pain or dying make me doubt? Did God never love any but *Enoch* and *Elijah*? And what am I better than my Fathers? O for a clearer ſtronger Faith, to ſhew me the World that excells this, more than this excells the Womb that conceived me! Then I ſhould not fear my third Birth-Day for any Pangs that precede it. Methinks *Daniel's* Title, *a Man greatly beloved*, ſhould be enough to make one joyfully love and truſt God, both in

Life and Death. And have not all the Saints that Title in their Degrees? What else signifies their Mark, *Holiness to the Lord?* It is but our Separation to God as his peculiar beloved People. And how are we separated but by mutual Love? He that is no otherwise beloved than Hypocrites and Unbelievers, must have his Portion with them; and the Ungodly, Unholy, and Unregenerate *shall not stand in Judgment*, nor *see God*, nor *enter into his Kingdom*. Upright Souls are to blame for their groundless Doubts of God's Love, not for their acknowledging it, rejoicing in it, or for being solitious to make it sure. Love brought me into the World, and furnished me with a Thousand Mercies, and has provided for me, delivered, and preserved me till now; and will it not entertain my separate Soul? Is God like false or insufficient Friends, that forsake us in Adversity?

§ 19. I confess I have by Sin wronged Love, but all, except Christ, were Sinners, whom Love has purified and received to Glory. *God who is rich in Mercy, for his great Love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in Sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by Grace we are saved) and hath raised us up together in heavenly Places in Christ Jesus.* O that I could *love much*, that have so *much forgiven!* The Glorified praise *him that loved us, and washed us from our Sins in his own Blood, and made us Kings and Priests unto God. Our Father, which hath loved us, hath given us everlasting Consolation, and good Hope thro' Grace.* I know no Sin which I repent not of with self-loathing, and I earnestly beg and labour that none of my Sins may be unknown to me. "O

" that

" that God would bless my Accusations, that I " may not be unknown to myself, tho' some think " me much better than I am! *Who can understand* " *his Errors?* Lord, *cleanse thou me from secret* " *Faults; keep back thy Servant also from presumptu-* " *ous Sins! I have an Advocate with thee,* and thy " Promise, that *if we confess our Sins,* thou wilt *for-* " *give them.* Wherever I have erred, Lord, make " it known to me, that my Confession may pre- " vent the Sin of others; and where I have not " erred, confirm and accept me in the right. And " since an unworthy Worm has had so many " Testimonies of thy Love, let me not, when " thou sayest, *I have loved thee,* unthankfully ask, " *wherein hast thou loved me?* Heaven is not more " spangled with Stars, than thy Word and Works " with the refulgent Signatures of Love. Thy " well-beloved Son, the Son of thy Love, under- " taketh the Message and Work of the greatest " Love, was full of the Spirit of Love; which he " shed abroad in the Hearts of thine Elect, that " the Love of the Father, the Grace of the Son, " and the Communion of the Spirit, may be their " Hope and Life. By his Works, Sufferings, and " Gifts, as well as by his comfortable Word, he " said to his Disciples, *As the Father loved me, so have* " *I loved you, continue ye in my Love.* Lord, how shall " we continue in it, but by the thankful Belief of " thy Love and Loveliness, desiring still to love " thee more, and in all Things to know and do " thy Will, which thou knowest is my Soul's De- " sire."

§ 20. ' Draw nearer, O my Soul, to the Lord ' of Love, and be not seldom and slight in thy

' Con-

'Contemplation of his Love and Loveliness. Dwell 'in the Sun-Shine, and thou wilt know that it is 'light and warm, and comfortable. Distance and 'Strangeness cherish thy Doubts. *Acquaint thy-'self with him, and be at Peace.* Look up, often 'and earnestly look up, after thy ascended glori-'fied Head. Think where, and what he is, and 'what he is now doing for all his own, and how 'once abased, suffering Love is now triumphant, 'reigning, glorified Love; and therefore not less 'now, than in all its tender Expressions on Earth.' Had I done this more and better, and as I have persuaded others to do it, I had lived in more convincing Delights of God's Love, which would have turned the Fears of Death into more joyful Hopes, and more earnest *Desires to be with Christ*, in the Arms, in the World, in the Life of Love, as *far better* than to be here in a World of Darkness, Doubts, and Fears. "But, O my Father, thou "infinite Love, tho' my Arguments be many and "strong, my Heart is bad, my Strength is Weak-"ness, and I am insufficient to plead the Cause of "thy Love and Loveliness to myself or others. O "plead thy own Cause, and what Heart can resist? "Let it not be my Word only, but thine, that "*thou loveſt me*, even me a Sinner! Say as Christ to "*Lazarus, arise!* Tell me as thou dost that the "Sun is warm, yea, as thou didst, that my Parents "and dearest Friends loved me! Tell me, as by "the Consciousness and Works of Life thou tellest "me, that thou hast given me Life; that while I "can say, *Thou that knowest all Things, knowest that* "*I love thee*, I may infer, Therefore I know I am

"be-

" beloved of thee! Thus let me come to thee in
" the Confidence of thy Love, and long to be
" nearer, in the clearer Sight, the fuller Sense, and
" more joyful Exercise of Love for ever! *Father,*
" *into thy Hand, I commend my Spirit! Lord Jesus,*
" *receive my Spirit.*" Amen.

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